Commentary

Volume Sixty-eight, Number Two, August 1979

Ten Questions about SALT II, with the Administration's Answers and a Point-by-Point Critique by Edward N. Luttwak

A New Theory of Kashrut
Robert Alter

Myths about Minorities
Thomas Sowell

Watergate: Toward a Revisionist View
James A. Nuechterlein

Wandering Jews
Edouard Roditi

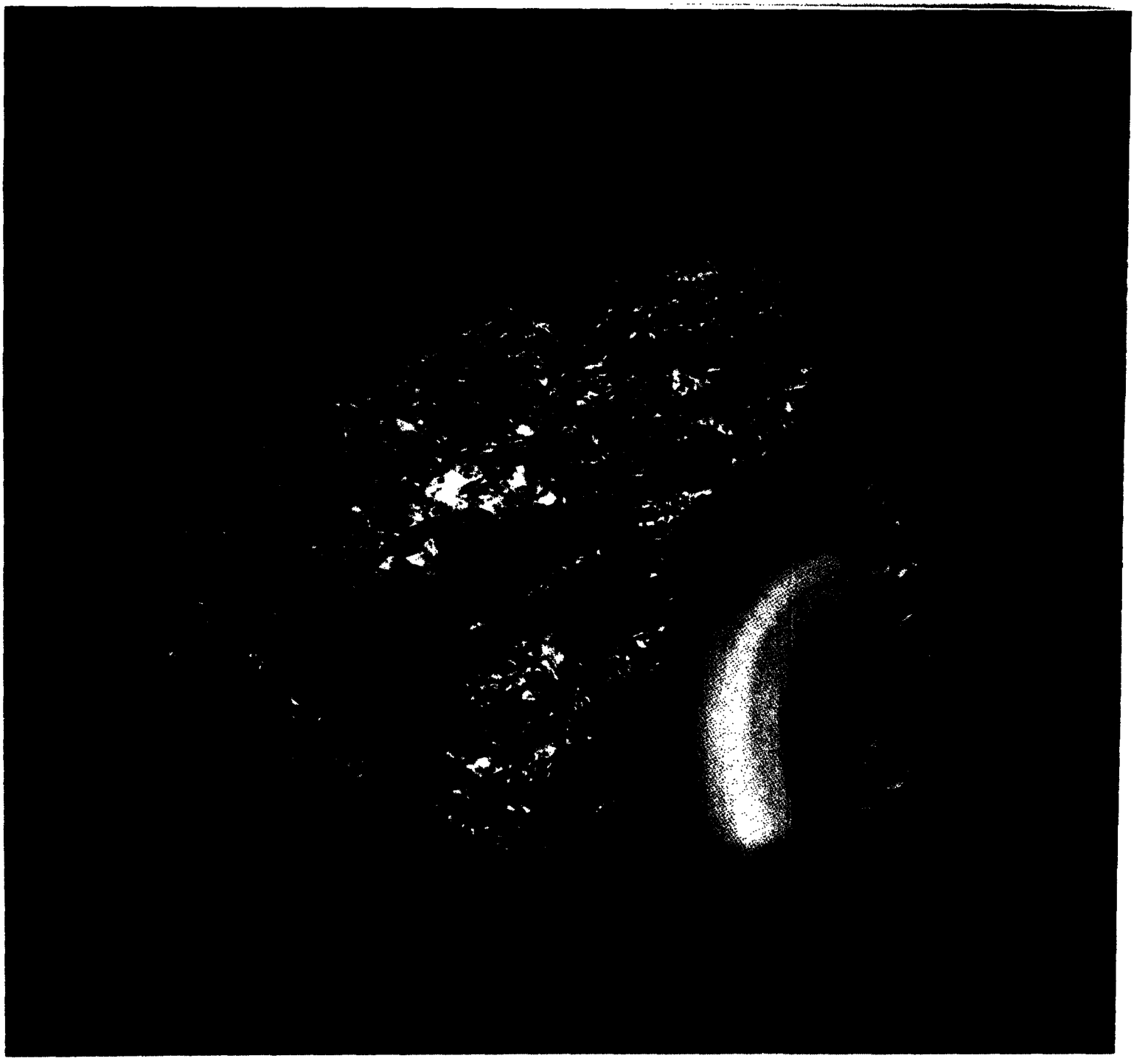
FICTION:
Evil & William Styron
Pearl K. Bell

THEATER:
How Not to Do Shakespeare & How Not to Write a Play
Jack Richardson

BOOKS:
Charles Horner
Julius Weinberg
James Ring Adams
Peter L. Berger

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE / $2.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Getting more out of coal takes skills that go beyond coal.

Coal represents 85 percent of America's energy reserves, but only 18 percent of our energy consumption. So, as the nation becomes dangerously dependent on foreign oil, it is a major challenge to overcome the barriers that block the greater use of coal.

As an oil company that is also a leading coal producer, Conoco is helping meet this challenge—often by applying oil technology to coal.

For instance, because America runs primarily on petroleum, we're working on ways to change coal into synthetic gas and oil.

And we've developed ways to reduce pollution when coal is burned.

At a time when some people in government are trying to limit oil company participation in the coal business, Conoco's efforts to reduce dependence on foreign oil demonstrate a very important point:

America will get more *out* of coal if any company that wants to can put its skills *into* coal.

conoco

Doing more with energy.

Conoco, Stamford, CT 06904. © 1979

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We asked Americans:

'Why Isn't America Using More Coal?'

Because Union Carbide's business depends on energy, our future growth depends on national policies which bring about reliable, long-term energy supplies from many sources, including coal. Since public attitudes help shape public policy, we commissioned a survey which included this question:

"Thinking about (each of the following), is it your feeling that this is keeping the U.S. from using more coal, or do you feel this is not having much effect on the use of coal in this country?"

	Restrains coal use	Not much effect
Coal's effect on environment	48%	40%
Coal's effect on human health	39%	50%
Cost of mining & transporting	34%	53%
Government regulations	49%	36%

Source: May 1979 national probability sample, by telephone, of 1,000 adults. Conducted for Union Carbide by Roger Seasonwein Associates, Inc. ("Don't knows" not shown.)

Half say regulations and environmental problems restrain coal use.

Most experts agree that we have a 300- to 400-year supply of coal in the United States, and 3 out of 4 Americans feel that we should rely heavily on coal for our energy needs. But when asked why coal—which represents 80% of our known energy resources—provides only 20% of our current needs, almost half named government regulations and the environmental effects of mining and using coal as restraining influences.

Getting on with the job.

HEW has found that "intensified use of coal as an energy source... would not lead to serious health or ecological consequences if certain precautions are taken." In addition, the National Coal Policy Project, composed of environmentalists, coal companies, utilities and other industries, recently reached agreement on a body of policies which would allow increased coal production and use in an environmentally acceptable manner.

In recognition of the country's urgent need to replace scarce oil with abundant coal, the President has asked federal regulatory agencies to review their policies and to propose ways of encouraging the greater use of domestic coal. At the same time, the country has an opportunity to take other steps towards this end:

- Make sure that regulations for the use of coal properly protect the environment—but don't needlessly inhibit coal production or use.
- Use coal for the things coal does best, such as generating electricity. This will save oil for those purposes for which there is no present substitute, such as transportation and chemical raw materials.
- Support legislation which provides for demonstration projects to convert coal into gas and liquid fuels and chemical raw materials.

Union Carbide's commitment to coal.

Union Carbide believes that America must use its abundant coal resources to help secure its energy future. And that we can do so in ways that protect land, air, water—and people. To those ends, we plan to use coal as a boiler fuel, whenever practical, in new facilities.

We first began research on converting coal to chemicals in the 1930's, but stopped work on these projects in the 1960's because coal could not compete with world oil then priced at $2 a barrel. With current energy shortages and skyrocketing oil and gas prices, it is again in our interest to turn to the coal utilization technologies we've developed over the years.

This advertisement is part of a continuing series on public opinions and national concerns.
For more information, write for a complimentary copy of the national survey, "Public Attitudes on Energy." Address: Energy, Union Carbide Corporation, Box G-16, 270 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017

UNION CARBIDE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 68 NUMBER 2 *AUGUST 1979*

Articles	21	Ten Questions about SALT II *The Administration and Edward N. Luttwak*
	33	Myths about Minorities *Thomas Sowell*
	38	Watergate: Toward a Revisionist View *James A. Nuechterlein*
In the Community	46	A New Theory of Kashrut *Robert Alter*
Observations	53	Wandering Jews *Edouard Roditi*
Fiction	57	Evil & William Styron *Pearl K. Bell*
Theater	59	How Not to Do Shakespeare & How Not to Write a Play *Jack Richardson*
Letters	4	from *Adam B. Ulam, Louis J. Walinsky, David Vogel, William Attwood, Stephen Sternheimer, Joseph S. Berliner, Daniel Yergin, Carl Gershman, Joshua Rubenstein, Chester E. Finn, Jr., Leslie Lenkowsky, Michael C. Hudson, Seth Cropsey, A.J. Sherman, Samuel McCracken, Darina Silone,* and others
Books in Review	62	Sideshow, by William Shawcross *Charles Horner*
	66	Being Jewish in America, by Arthur Hertzberg *Julius Weinberg*
	69	The Streets Were Paved with Gold, by Ken Auletta *James Ring Adams*
	71	For Capital Punishment, by Walter Berns *Peter L. Berger*

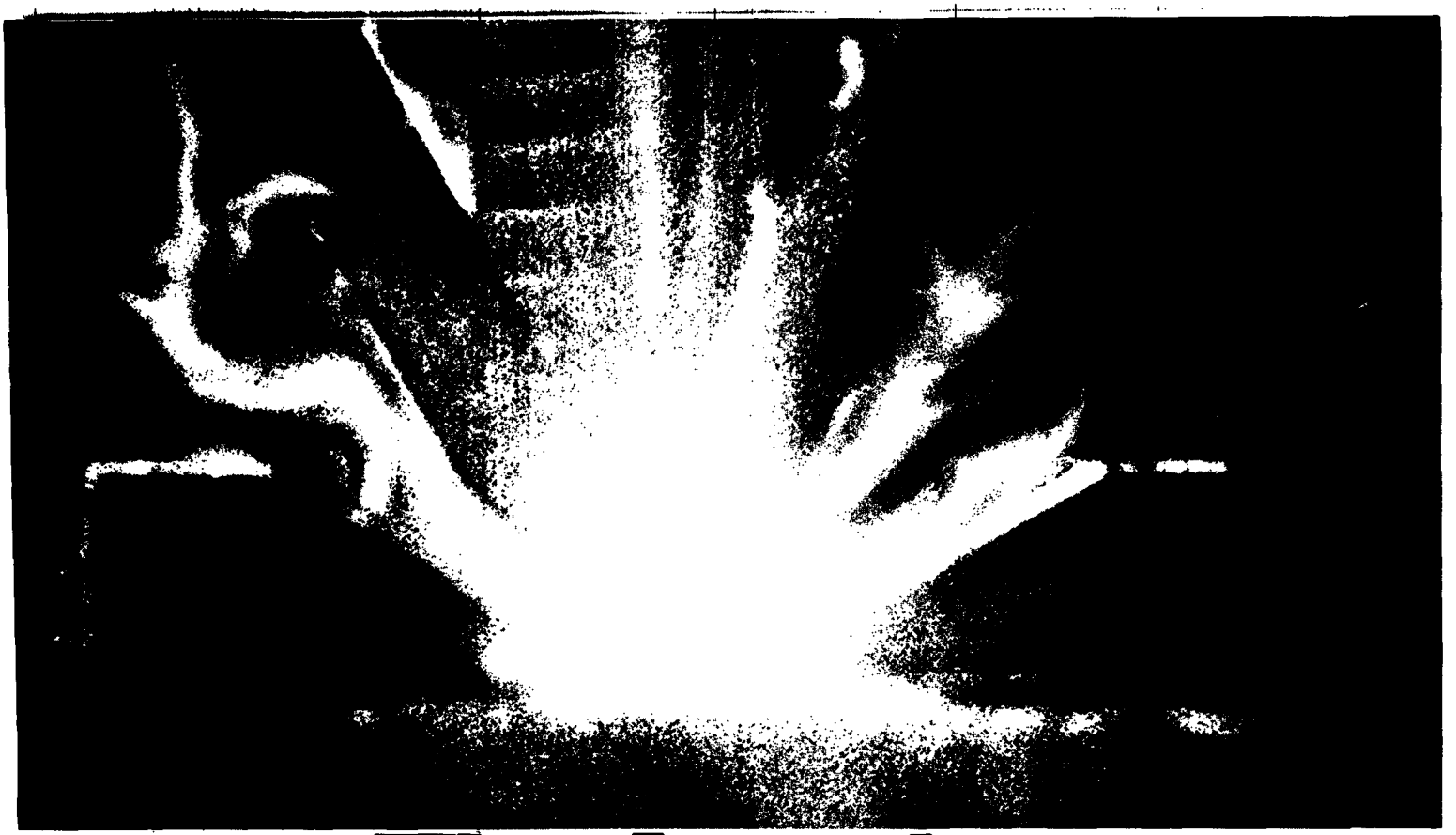
Editor: Norman Podhoretz
Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editor: Brenda Brown
Contributing Editors: Robert Alter, Milton Himmelfarb, Walter Laqueur
Comptroller: Philip Shamis
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Circulation Manager: Helene Hansen
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.50, $24 a year; 3 years $64; 5 years $96—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

Copyright © 1979 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—

Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Publication Number ISSN 0010-2601
EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Atomic Bond.

Using tiny explosive charges, Western Electric engineers are bonding metals with the elemental "glue" of the Universe.

Here's how it works. The atoms of all metals have a natural attraction for one another. If it weren't for the ever-present film of impurities coating the surface—the oxides, nitrides, and absorbed gasses—all metal atoms would bond to each other when brought together.

Exploding Things Together.

But the force of a high-intensity explosion on two adjacent metals will clean away the film of impurities. The explosion literally "blows" the impurities off the surfaces. So the atoms of the different metals can bond together.

The bond that results is stronger than both of the metals themselves.

As an industrial technique, explosive bonding has proved valuable in the manufacture of such heavyweight products as bi-metallic gun barrels.

Pinpoint Explosions.

But how would explosives work in the delicate, intricate world of telephone circuitry?

Scientists at Western Electric's Engineering Research Center solved the problem by developing ways to miniaturize and control explosive bonding. Soon, they could splice the ends of two thin communications wires inside a miniature explosive-coated sleeve.

And they could repair tiny defective contacts on delicate circuit boards. These gold contacts (membrane-thin "fingers" 1/10 by 3/4 of an inch) are reclad by thin sheets of gold foil (.0005 inches thick), coated with explosives. The repairs are literally "blown" onto the contacts, without disturbing the delicate circuitry less than 1/10 of an inch away.

Miniaturized explosive bonding is only one way we're helping your Bell Telephone Company hold down the cost of your telephone service today. For the future, it promises the benefits of bonding widely disparate metals and all sorts of other materials.

You Can Take It For Granted.

Most important, explosive bonds are contributing to the clarity of communications, the reliability of switching, the taken-for-granted assurance you have when you reach for your telephone.

The atomic bond—it's another innovation from Western Electric.

Keeping your communications system the best in the world.

Western Electric

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Richard Maass, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Frederick P. Rose, *Chairman*

Norman Alexander
Donald M. Blinken
Charles D. Breitel
Naomi W. Cohen
Theodore Ellenoff
Edward E. Elson
Richard C. Ernst
Edith U. Fierst
Maurice Glinert
Robert H. Haines
Lewis J. Laventhol
Bess Myerson
Ned Pines
David Sher
John Slawson
Alan M. Stroock*
Laurence A. Tisch
Ben Touster
Gerard Weinstock

**Honorary Member*

Letters from Readers

Trade & the USSR

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I subscribe almost fully to what Carl Gershman says in his article, "Selling Them the Rope: Business & the Soviets" [May]. My only reservation is that I do think that, if intelligently handled, U.S. foreign trade could be made an instrument for inducing the Soviets to behave, or at least to behave better than they have in various areas of the world. To a certain degree, it could also be made an instrument for humanizing their own system. I simply do not see why we should help their economy, while on every front, whether in the Near East or in Africa, they keep trying, and openly so, to make our life, not to mention that of the people concerned, more difficult. What the article does not say is that we also help the Soviets indirectly by our credits to the East European Communist regimes, e.g., Poland; this in turn relieves the Soviets of considerable strain on their own economy, and strengthens the local Communist governments as well. All in all, some future historian will undoubtedly see it as sheer madness, this helping of a regime which is doing everything to harm our interests all over the world without trying at least to make it moderate its behavior.

ADAM B. ULAM
Russian Research Center
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carl Gershman's generally excellent piece is a real contribution to the question of U.S.-USSR economic relations. . . . But a few observations are in order to qualify and broaden the scope of Mr. Gershman's analysis.

1. In view of developments since 1975, some doubt must attach to the USSR's interest in massive credits by the U.S. or the West generally. In 1975, the Soviet trade deficit with the West exceeded $4 billion, and the even larger deficit of its East European satellites with the West was close to $5 billion, for a total in excess of $9 billion. Rapidly growing trade with the West in the 1970's increased the hard-currency debt of the Soviet bloc to over $45 billion. . . . Subsequent trade figures demonstrate clearly a decision on the part of the East to spur exports and curb import growth so as to reduce trade deficits with the West. . . . By 1978, the combined Soviet bloc had achieved a balance in its trade with the rest of the world.

2. The USSR and its satellites have leaned heavily on countertrade (the "compensation agreements" Mr. Gershman describes) to insure their ability to pay for needed imports with current and future exports. . . . Thus, if the (ironically) financially conservative Soviet Union wishes to avoid adding to its hard-currency debt position, it will strive to finance its desired imports from the U.S. primarily with the hard currency it can earn by sales to the U.S. and by compensation agreements, and not by going further into debt.

3. The U.S. (and Western) disadvantage in strengthening the Soviet military-industrial complex does not tell the entire story of the pros and cons of technology transfer. Helping the Soviet Union at least partly to overcome its economic inefficiency and lagging economic growth has also helped it to satisfy consumer demands better than it otherwise could, while still maintaining desired levels of investment and military expenditure. It has thus helped stave off a growing consumer dissatisfaction and possible political unrest.

Moreover, our easy policy of technology transfer, particularly in the oil exploration-extraction field, will help the Soviet Union retain the dominance over its East European satellites it might otherwise lose. It is not the USSR, as Mr. Gershman erroneously says, which will become a net oil importer in the mid-1980's, but rather the Soviet bloc as a whole. The USSR's export surplus will become very tight. It will not be able to meet the needs of the other bloc members and still have enough left over to sell to Western European countries in quantities sufficient to earn the hard currency it needs to finance its own essential imports. This inability to satisfy the minimal oil needs of its satellites could increase tremendously the centrifugal forces already evident in relations between the Soviet Union and its satellites and could be a political calamity for the Soviet Union. Providing the USSR with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

oil-drilling technology, therefore, could make the key difference in enabling the Soviet Union to keep its restive satellites in line.

I am not sure I agree completely with Mr. Gershman that under no circumstances should we transfer to the USSR technology that contributes even indirectly to its military might. But it does seem to me an eminently sound policy position to link significant U.S. technology transfers to significant political concessions and behavior on the Soviet side.

LOUIS J. WALINSKY
Cohasset, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The disgraceful eagerness of American businessmen to sell their technology to the Soviet Union described by Carl Gershman is more than simply a matter of short-sighted greed: it reflects an even more disturbing similarity of perspectives that is emerging between Soviet officials and American executives.

American businessmen have a closer working relationship with their Soviet counterparts than almost any other group in American society. While overt anti-Semitism has diminished within the American business community, both Soviet officials and American managers correctly perceive their respective Jewish communities as the major obstacle to improved "cooperation" between them. Corporate lobbying against administration and congressional attempts to link U.S. foreign economic policy with human-rights considerations has been strongly influenced and guided by Soviet political officials. Indeed, the business community has firmly displaced the Left as the most important focus of Soviet penetration into American society. The rapport between American executives and Soviet officials has been aided by the fact that they both manage relatively authoritarian bureaucracies and are uncomfortable with social and intellectual criticism.

Ironically, as American businesses have become more ideologically rigid on domestic issues, they have become more "liberal" on foreign-policy matters—the precise opposite of the 60's, when corporate liberalism at home was accompanied by inflexible anti-Communism abroad. . . .

DAVID VOGEL
Stanford University
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One can only infer from the title of Carl Gershman's article that trading with the Soviets means helping them do us damage. This is nonsense for several reasons.

1. Trade, by implication, is mutually beneficial (or two sides would not engage in it).

2. According to businessmen now trading with Moscow, there is nothing the Soviets buy or could buy from us that they could not obtain elsewhere—either in Europe or Japan. So why should we turn over this business, relatively modest though it is, to our competitors?

3. The Jackson-Vanik amendment's only consequences were to reduce Jewish emigration sharply for a number of years. This emigration has quietly risen again and is now averaging about 4,000 a month. Thus, there is no reason not to extend most-favored-nation status to the Soviet Union as well as to China, since it is clear that making trade harder does not make life easier for the citizens of totalitarian countries.

4. Commercial relations may not "promote détente," to use Mr. Gershman's phrase, but trade does increase contacts between Russians and Americans, and in the long run a world in which we are better acquainted is likely to be a safer one.

5. Finally, trade is non-ideological. It is usually, as I have said, mutually beneficial. Above all, it is "normal." So if we lower our sights from détente (which is too often confused with entente) and agree that "normalization" is a more realistic as well as a sane objective in U.S.-Soviet relations, then the argument for encouraging trade strikes me as conclusive.

WILLIAM ATTWOOD
Newsday
Garden City, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carl Gershman's article concerning the advantages and (mostly) disadvantages of U.S. trade with the Soviet Union is simultaneously stimulating and alarming. While insightful in many of its historical

The most civilized hotel in New York. Maybe the world.

The Regency Hotel
Park Avenue at 61st Street, New York, N.Y. 10021. (212) 759-4100

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IMMEDIATE OPENINGS FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FUTURE. APPLY NOW.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Not long ago, if you mentioned to someone you were in the information management field, you were greeted with a polite smile and a vacant stare.

Today, you're liable to get a job offer.

Suddenly major corporations are hiring Directors of Information Management and Managers of Information Services. Who, when they arrive on the job, will find several hundred million pieces of information waiting to be managed.

Fortunately, they'll also find a company who can help them manage it: Xerox.

We offer Xerox copiers and duplicators that not only reproduce information, but also sort, reduce and copy on both sides.

Electronic printers that take information directly from computers—and then print it out with laser beams.

Electronic typing systems that type and store information—so you can readily find and revise it.

In fact, today there are Xerox machines that can perform almost any information management job. Including the most important one:

Helping information managers do their job.

XEROX

XEROX® is a trademark of XEROX CORPORATION.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perspectives, Mr. Gershman's analysis unfortunately reflects much of the myopia which has traditionally constricted American thinking about trade issues. . . . He also errs in frequently sacrificing a careful weighing of the facts in favor of dramatic hyperbole.

Thus, to repeat, as Mr. Gershman does, Lenin's dictum on "selling the rope" ("the bourgeoisie will supply us with the rope . . . [with which] it will hang itself") lends it an automatic credibility that I am sure Mr. Gershman would not attribute to Lenin's pronouncements on subjects such as war (a product of imperialism); Communism ("Soviet power plus electrification"); or the role of bureaucracy in the modern service state (a job to be filled by "any cook and chimney sweep"). More specifically, such a perspective ignores the fact that, as innumerable studies show, much of the "rope" gets lost, stolen, spoiled, or misapplied in ways that Lenin never envisioned in the halcyon days of the 1920's.

What is most striking is not the USSR's thirst for Western technology, but rather its inability to replicate this technology, to improve upon it, or even to utilize it with maximum efficiency (unlike, for example, the Japanese). Two examples will suffice to make the point. The importation of Western-built automobile plants has not enabled the Soviet Ministry of Automobile Industry to revolutionize its production processes. Negotiations for additional plants of the same type are currently under way. The same holds true for the importation of phosphate fertilizer and ammonia plants from Japan.

Secondly, by Mr. Gershman's own admission (and correctly so), the USSR remains chiefly an exporter of raw materials, not finished goods, machine tools, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, or the like. Some three decades of "technology absorption" (as documented in comprehensive studies such as that by Anthony Sutton) have yet to enable the USSR to generate anything even approximating the level of purely commercial competition that the Japanese economy yielded after only fifteen years of technology imports from the West. . . .

There are, however, far greater deficiencies—I am tempted to say "dangers"—in the kind of argument Mr. Gershman makes. This is true if only because the Export Administration Act of 1969 comes up for review by Congress this fall, and views such as those advanced by Mr. Gershman are likely to have an attentive audience among U.S. policy-makers. . . . Mr. Gershman describes the issue as if the United States could (and should) act unilaterally and effectively either to expand or contract trade with the Soviet Union (and, one would assume, with the Communist bloc in general—although the case of the People's Republic of China does not seem to fit so neatly). But this is decidedly *not* the case.

As the very existence of CoCom [the international body which regulates the export of strategic items to Communist nations] makes clear, trade controls, restraints, or embargoes on the part of the West are effective only to the degree that they are multilateral and accepted by all partners (the NATO nations, minus Iceland, plus Japan). But the fact is that today the United States stands in proud—and largely ineffective—isolation in its opposition to more normal trade relations with the Communist bloc. . . . My own work, as well as that of some of my colleagues, indicates that neither our Western European allies (government and business included) nor Japan shares our belief that trade issues and political issues either should or can be successfully "linked." In line with the traditional distinction that nations have made between "high foreign policy" and "low foreign policy," the nations of Western Europe and Japan argue that economic issues and diplomatic issues should be weighed separately and on their own merits. . . . From the perspective of our Western allies, experience indicates (with, of course, the kinds of exceptions that exist everywhere) that the trade guidelines inherent in "good" commercial behavior are, by and large, adequate to prevent the transfer of technology to erstwhile competitors or enemies, be they capitalist or Communist. And their reading of the Soviet economic situation suggests that the obstacles internal to the economy of the USSR are quite sufficient to prevent any substantial or rapid diffusion.

From a political perspective, therefore, any forthcoming unilateral attempt by the United States to impose new trade restraints or a more "rigorous control policy" on CoCom (to quote Mr. Gershman) would invite disastrous conflicts within an alliance which is already badly frayed over a number of issues. . . . By pressuring the Europeans to accept further restrictions on their trade with the East . . . we may simply reinforce the claim of those on the Left that behind the thin veneer of "national security" to which the U.S. government frequently appeals lies nothing more than naked, economic self-interest and the exploitation of our allies.

For the Japanese case, the scenario is even more gloomy. We cannot simultaneously demand "voluntary" restraints from Japan on its exports to the West and stricter controls on its exports to the Communist bloc without setting in motion those same forces of protectionism, ultra-nationalism, and militarism which brought the world to the brink of disaster only a few decades ago. It is from this perspective, I would argue; that Mr. Gershman's whole approach to the problems of East-West trade and export controls is not only wrong but politically dangerous. It is to be hoped that broader visions will prevail—at least before Congress acts next year.

STEPHEN STERNHEIMER
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There can be no quarrel with the present U.S. policy of denying the USSR any technology that directly enhances its military capability. Carl Gershman urges, however, that we move well beyond that and strive to withhold any "technology transfers which contribute in any way at all to the Soviet Union's military and industrial strength." A proposal that drastic requires a more searching evaluation than Mr. Gershman provides.

One must suppose that he assumes the benefits that policy would confer on the U.S. to be very large, and that there are no serious costs to the U.S. in implementing it. If so, I believe he is wrong on both counts. He exaggerates the extent to which the U.S. can influence the size of the Soviet military effort by our trade policy; and he understates the costs—political, diplomatic, and economic—that we would bear in trying to implement it. Let me sketch out a few reasons for my view:

With respect to the benefits:

1. The gains that the USSR en-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

joys today from imports of advanced technology are much smaller than in the 1930's. At that time it was often a choice between an imported automobile plant or no automobile plant at all. Today it is a choice between a more efficient Italian plant or a less efficient Soviet-built plant. Imported technology serves today primarily to reduce costs and is in no sense essential.

2. Soviet dependence on Western technology is further reduced today, relative to the 1930's, by the Soviets' full access to the technology of other Communist countries, notably East Germany and Czechoslovakia. It is significant that the Soviets experienced their highest postwar growth rates in the 1950's when they imported virtually no Western technology, though they are not likely to attain those growth rates again with or without Western technology.

3. The poor performance of the Soviet economy in generating its own technological innovation greatly diminishes the net productivity of imported technology installed in the USSR, and impedes the diffusion of that technology through the rest of the economy. No statistically discernible difference has been found between the productivity of foreign and domestic equipment operating in the USSR. Individual instances aside, the policy of technology import has not proven to be the *deus ex machina* upon which the political leadership has counted to reverse the decline in the rate of economic growth.

4. If the objective is to weaken the Soviet economy, there is no reason to limit the controls to technology, for everything the USSR obtains by importing presumably costs it less in resources than if it were produced domestically. In fact, a greater burden would be placed on the Soviet economy by denying the Soviets Western grain than by denying them technology, for Soviet agricultural productivity is probably lower, relative to the West, than industrial productivity. Moreover, if Mr. Gershman's objection to the Kama River project is that it will produce some trucks for the military, he ought also to object to our grain exports because some of our grain is surely consumed by Soviet troops. Thus the concentration on denying technology exports, to the exclusion of other types of exports, diminishes the benefits to the U.S. of the proposed policy.

5. Even if the denial of Western technology were to succeed in further diminishing the Soviet rate of growth, it is not at all clear that the consequence would be a significant decrease in military expenditures, which amount to only 11-12 per cent of Soviet GNP. The military build-up of the past fifteen years has proceeded in the face of the steady decline in the rate of growth. Military prowess is one of the few genuine attainments of the Soviet regime, and if retrenchment is required, it is likely that the consumer rather than the military will bear the brunt of it. In fact, in the current Five-Year Plan even investment was cut back in order to maintain military expenditures.

With respect to the costs to the United States of imposing a policy of technology controls:

1. It would require us to exert strong diplomatic, political, and economic pressures on other industrial nations to join with us; not only our NATO allies, but also

Summer meals are a Picnic with EMPIRE'S NEW
Fried Chicken
Quick, No-Fuss Heat and Eat
Fried Chicken Breasts
Fried Chicken Wings
Fried Chicken DRUMSTICKS & THIGHS
Fried Chicken
Fully-cooked, crisply battered and breaded fried chicken, ready on short notice from the freezer for easy-goin' picnic-style summer meal-times. Empire's specially-bred tender chicken and old-world flavor secrets make it deliciously superior to ordinary fried chicken. Enjoy . . . eat in good health, thank goodness!
KOSHER
Empire
POULTRY
The Most Trusted Name in Kosher Poultry and Foods . . . Preferred Worldwide

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FREEDOM BEGINS AT HOME

Gannett is a nationwide communications company with a world of different voices: 80 daily newspapers, 7 television and 12 radio stations in 33 states and two U.S. territories.

Yet the Gannett name is not widely known because of a deliberate policy. A policy based on a single word: freedom.

There is no single Gannett editorial voice. Every Gannett newspaper, every television and radio station is free to express its own opinions, free to serve the best interests of its own community in its own way.

The voice of the whole community.

At Gannett, responsible and responsive coverage of the whole community is not just our job. It's our responsibility.

Serving the best interests of a community means being its mirror. It means reflecting the varied tastes and interests and news needs of the old as well as the young. The rich as well as the poor. The powerful and the powerless.

And that means total community coverage. In the news. In features. In sports. And in the editorials—which must be the conscience of the whole community—constantly pressing for solutions to problems.

Newspapers and radio and television stations are forums for democracy. Places where people go to express and find diverse opinions. Without fear or favor or any question of fairness to all sides.

Places for the government to get consumer feedback, the public pulse, vital food for thought on important issues. The right places, too, for nourishing the economic well-being of the community and keeping its marketplace in good health through advertising services.

We care because we live there.

Every Gannett newspaper, every radio and television station strives in its own way each day to touch the lives of its readers, viewers and listeners. Each as distinct as the community it serves.

This is community journalism. And at its heart is local news. The news that touches the lives of everyone it serves.

It means being an investigator and exposing wrongdoing. It's being a guardian and watching over the community's well-being. It means being a recorder and noting the passage of daily life with its joys and sorrows, its trials and triumphs.

Our commitment to freedom.

At Gannett we have a commitment to freedom. Freedom for the men and women of Gannett to become more professional every day. Freedom to share in the blessings of our free society and its free enterprise system. Freedom to fulfill our First Amendment obligations.

We take our First Amendment responsibility seriously at Gannett. Not just because it protects the journalists' right to print or broadcast the news. But because it is the cornerstone of our democracy, the people's guarantee of freedom.

With our recently concluded merger with Combined Communications Corporation, we're moving toward a new and expanded world of total information services. Which includes, in addition to newspapers and broadcast, outdoor advertising and a public opinion research company. But as we grow bigger, the same principles of editorial freedom, excellence and community service will still apply.

And so from Guam to the Virgin Islands, from Reno to Rochester, from Pensacola to Phoenix, from Atlanta to Hawaii, every Gannett newspaper, every television and radio station is free to set its own course, to meet its local news obligations, to express its own opinions. Free to serve the best interests of its own community in its own way.

Gannett

A world of different voices where freedom speaks.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

countries like Japan, Sweden, and Switzerland. All these countries are much more dependent on foreign trade than we are, and the loss of foreign markets imposes greater hardships upon them. It was precisely those bitter controversies over export controls that led to the eventual dismantling of past controls. Mr. Gershman writes that "the relaxation of U.S. controls . . . is a major reason for the diminishing effectiveness of CoCom." He has it backward; it was the growing ineffectiveness that led to the relaxation. NATO can ill afford the strains that would follow upon our effort to reimpose our views on this matter upon them.

2. One of the negative effects of our earlier export controls was to support the Soviets' efforts to minimize the relations between other Communist countries and the West and increase their dependence on the USSR. In today's polycentric Communist world, we should strive to support the efforts of the Soviet satellites to achieve greater independence from the USSR in their foreign, domestic, and military policies. If we sell them technology, know-how, licenses, and so forth that we deny to the USSR, the greater will be the Soviet demands upon them to transfer that technology covertly to the USSR, and the more frequent our collisions with them on this matter.

3. Trade with the USSR is no exception to the general rule that both partners gain from trading. One of the costs of the policy of technology controls is to reduce the volume of trade and therefore of real income in the West, with possible increases in unemployment. The West would feel the effects of a decline in Soviet exports of oil, timber, manganese, and chrome.

4. The wider the net of trade restrictions, the larger the governmental administrative apparatus. Among the costs are increased governmental intervention in commerce; conflict within government and between government and industry over export licenses; and the increased cost of trade in general. We know from the experience of the postwar years that there were very few technologies and very little technological knowledge that the Soviets were not able to acquire illicitly through third and fourth countries. The tighter we wish the control system to be, the larger the international inspection operation we will need to maintain it and the greater the potential for conflict with other sovereign nations.

The implication of this evaluation is that we should continue to allow the Soviets to import any technology that does not directly enhance their military power. The view one takes of that prospect depends upon one's assessment of the larger military-political balance. In my judgment, Soviet policy today is in a shambles. The Soviets lost almost all the sources of influence around the world that they once hoped to have. Their technology is nowhere in demand. Their arts, their political system, their claim to social justice, attract few adherents around the world. Their economy has lost its dynamism and is no longer a model for the Third World or anywhere else. After having transferred a huge volume of their own technology to China, they succeeded only in converting that vast neighbor into their fiercest enemy. They have lost the ideological leadership of the Communist movements around the world. They confront mounting ethnic tensions within their own country and the loyalty of their East European allies is very much in doubt. They have succeeded in establishing a presence in a few weak countries from time to time, but they have been ignominiously evicted from others. It is ironic that they have only one major source of influence left—military prowess. They have, in addition, one minor advantage: the ability to acquire from the West technology superior to that which they can produce themselves. That should be small comfort for all that they do not have.

By contrast, the U.S. remains in a much stronger position of power and influence around the world in all the respects that the USSR is not. We do a lot of things well, but there are some things we aren't able to do so well. One of them is economic warfare. That is why I believe it is better to let the Soviets continue to enjoy one of the *few* advantages they have in international affairs, rather than try to patch up that small leak when we are not very good at that kind of plumbing.

Mr. Gershman should not quote Lenin on matters in which that gentleman has proven to be a poor prophet. It is now sixty years after the Russian revolution and the Soviets have not yet succeeded either in hanging the bourgeoisie or even in producing their own rope.

JOSEPH S. BERLINER
Russian Research Center
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his interesting article, "Selling Them the Rope," Carl Gershman quotes me out of context. He writes: "In our own time, it is widely believed that trade, in Daniel Yergin's words, 'draws the Soviet Union into the community of advanced industrial nations.'" Mr. Gershman then goes on to write: "The view that trade will lead to liberalization in Russia is partly based on the not illogical belief that exposure to the West will encourage the development of Western norms and values in the USSR." In my April 1977 article in *Foreign Affairs*, I had specifically dissociated myself from the view Mr. Gershman attributes to me. Two sentences before the sentence Mr. Gershman quotes, I had written that trade "is no guarantee against conflict, nor is it likely to generate any dramatic changes in the Soviet political system."

DANIEL YERGIN
Harvard University
Boston, Massachusetts

CARL GERSHMAN writes:

I want to thank Adam B. Ulam, Louis J. Walinsky, and David Vogel for their generally sympathetic remarks about my article. But several points raised in their letters deserve clarification.

First, while I fully agree with Mr. Walinsky that the Soviet Union's projected oil shortage could weaken Soviet control over its East European satellites (which now import about 1.5 million barrels of Soviet oil daily), I was not in error in writing that the USSR itself, and not the Soviet bloc as a whole, could become a net importer of oil by the mid-1980's. The 1977 CIA report on the subject predicted that by 1985 Soviet oil output would drop to 8-10 million barrels a day, while its domestic consumption would rise to over 10 million barrels a day. Since this projection takes an even dimmer view than Mr. Walinsky does of the USSR's oil-production capabilities in the 1980's, it strengthens his point about the political consequences within the Soviet bloc of the oil shortage.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Second, I agree with Mr. Ulam that trade, "if intelligently handled," could be a means of influencing Soviet behavior. The Jackson amendment, which I endorsed in my article, is one attempt to use trade in this way. Another source of leverage, so far unexplored, is the Soviet Union's growing dependence on U.S. agricultural products. Indeed, it is a reflection of the present sad state of American foreign policy that we are prepared to let a threatened Nigerian oil embargo influence our policy in Africa, while we do not even consider threatening a grain embargo against Moscow as one means of restraining *its* behavior in Africa.

What I specifically opposed in my article—and here I disagree with Mr. Walinsky—is trying to purchase Soviet moderation with technology that would strengthen the USSR militarily. Even if this policy could work in the short run, which I doubt, it is a form of "deterrence" which in the long run would do us in. It seems a hard enough job to alert the nation to the problem of technology transfers to the Soviet Union, to identify the technologies which must be controlled, and to develop an effective means of implementing such a policy without also tying controls to shifting Soviet tactics. Either we should seek to control the transfer of technology, or we should not. If it is a carrot-and-stick policy we want, we have other carrots and larger sticks.

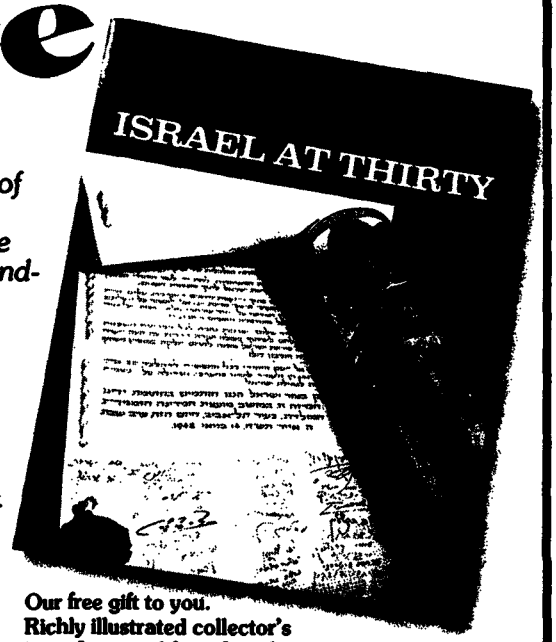
The difficulty of simply establishing the need for a policy of controls is amply demonstrated by the letters of William Attwood, Stephen Sternheimer, and Joseph S. Berliner. From his letter, one would not know that Mr. Attwood had read my article at all. He simply repeats the standard arguments favoring U.S.-Soviet trade as if he were reciting a litany. Points 1, 2, and 4 of his letter were dealt with at length in my article, so I won't spend time on them now. His swipe at the Jackson amendment (point 3) is largely gratuitous. I defended it only parenthetically, by way of distinguishing between its commendable intent to buy people's freedom and a policy which seeks to control the transfer of technology. I might say, though, that in opposing the Jackson amendment on the grounds that it makes life harder for Soviet Jews and dissidents, Mr. Attwood is being disingenuous. He cares about trade before people, and he should say so. Andrei Sakharov recently defended the Jackson amendment as an effective "lever for influencing the emigration policy" of the Soviet Union and as a symbol which "vividly embodies the will of the American people to defend human rights the world over."

Mr. Attwood's last point, that "trade is non-ideological," is a normative judgment, not a description of reality. It reveals an attitude of total naiveté concerning the Soviet Union, where *nothing* is non-ideological, whether it be history, science, literature, art, music, news reporting, or sports. The Soviets have never hesitated to use trade for political purposes, as when they cut off credits to Yugoslavia and China following the break with these countries, or when they stopped buying wool from Australia after it had given asylum

SPECIAL TO READERS OF Commentary

Free

Israel at Thirty 1948-1978.
The wonderful story of Israel's rebirth, in words and "Life"-size photographs. Independence, immigration, war, and the struggle for peace.
Oversize, softcover.



Yours free with every new subscription to **The Jerusalem Post** — the only Israeli newspaper written in English. The latest in political, military, cultural, religious and business news each week.

Our free gift to you. Richly illustrated collector's item. Imported from Israel.

The Post is your entry into the life, heart, and very soul of Israel today. Written, after all, by people who don't just report the news. They live it!

To receive your free gift, subscribe today. Or extend your current subscription before it expires.

Supply is limited.

CLIP & MAIL TODAY

THE JERUSALEM POST
INTERNATIONAL EDITION

Yes! Send me my free gift copy of **Israel at Thirty** and
☐ *Begin* a new subscription in my name; or
☐ *Extend* my current subscription. Attached is my Jerusalem Post subscription label.
☐ I want to send *gift subscriptions*, see attached list.
☐ $30. for each subscription is enclosed. (52 issues, 1 year).

45

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *State* _____ *Zip* _____

Mail to:
The Jerusalem Post
110 East 59th Street
New York, NY 10022

Gift Subscriptions: ☐ Yes. Send **The Jerusalem Post** to those on the attached list ($30. each). And send a beautiful, very special gift card in my name, signed,

"_____"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to a Soviet official. They also have not hesitated to use politics to promote trade, as their détente policy demonstrates. As long as the Soviet regime uses trade as a political instrument both to strengthen its rule domestically and its military power, we cannot have normal trade relations. It is a dangerous delusion to believe otherwise.

Like Mr. Attwood, Mr. Sternheimer does not see any danger in transfering advanced technology to the Soviet Union. In emphasizing that the Soviet Union will never be as serious an economic rival as Japan, he demonstrates only that he misses the whole point of my article. The Soviet challenge is not economic and never will be as long as the Soviet Union is a totalitarian country. The challenge is military and strategic. After sixty years of importing sophisticated Western technology, the Soviet Union is a minor trading power. But it is arguably the strongest military power in the world today, requiring the very countries which provide it with advanced technology to devote an inordinate part of their resources to their self-defense.

Mr. Sternheimer shows not the least bit of concern over this. Instead, he is alarmed at the unlikely prospect that Japan will become ultra-nationalist and militarist if we seek its cooperation in an effort to prevent the flow of militarily significant technology to the Soviet Union. I suggest that Mr. Sternheimer stop fighting World War II and face up to the real dangers at hand. His complacency in this regard is evident in the view that "the trade guidelines inherent in 'good' commercial behavior are, by and large, adequate to prevent the transfer of technology to erstwhile competitors or enemies, be they capitalist or Communist." Why lump together all countries, when the issue is the Soviet military threat to the West? And what conceivable evidence is there that "'good' commercial behavior" is an adequate means of controlling the transfer to the Soviet Union of technology that could enhance its military capability? Since my article appeared, it has been disclosed that IBM computers at the Kama River truck plant are being used to produce military vehicles. According to a report in the New York *Times* (June 18, 1979), U.S. military officials also "contend that Moscow has used American seismic equipment to enhance its anti-submarine warfare potential and that American machine tools for producing precision ball-bearings have probably helped Soviet engineers to develop multiple warheads for new intercontinental missiles." We can expect new and probably more disturbing disclosures of this kind in the future.

Mr. Berliner says he favors denying the USSR technology that would "directly" strengthen its military capability. But it is clear from his letter that he defines "directly" in the narrowest sense and would favor, for example, providing the USSR with technology that would enable it to meet its energy needs during the next decade. Mr. Berliner correctly states that the view one takes on the question of controlling technology transfer to the USSR "depends upon one's assessment of the larger political-military balance." By his own admission, therefore, his position on trade is determined by his assessment of the Soviet threat to Western security, which he simply dismisses. The USSR, he writes, has only one major source of influence, military power. But presumably this has little to do with "the larger military-political balance" which in Mr. Berliner's view vastly favors the U.S. His treatment of trade issues is marked by similar wishful thinking.

Mr. Berliner minimizes the benefits the Soviet Union receives from trade with the West, and overstates the costs to us of trying to implement a policy of technology controls. Regarding the benefits:

1. Even if it were true that the primary benefit to the USSR of imported technology is reducing costs of production, this still means that we help the Soviets divert scarce resources to the military sector.

2. The USSR's postwar economic growth did not take place without imported Western technology. As I noted in my article, U.S. Lend Lease shipments and the dismantling of German industry provided the Soviet Union with enormous amounts of advanced Western technology and equipment which were brought into full production in the 1950's. But even if no Western technology had been imported after the war, the Soviet economy would have grown, since it was rebuilding from the war's devastation. Moreover, Mr. Berliner overstates the advantage to the USSR today of access to the economies of East Germany and Czechoslovakia which are stagnating, in part because the Soviets have already milked them dry.

3. Mr. Berliner has no way of knowing if there is no difference between the productivity of foreign and domestic equipment operating in the USSR. How can he determine this, especially in military plants which are completely closed off to the outside world? Moreover, while the Soviets cannot easily diffuse Western technology throughout their economy, the sophistication of Soviet strategic weaponry and the growing evidence of the use of Western technology for military purposes indicate that the diffusion has been accomplished within the military sector, which is what matters most. Finally, Western technology may not reverse the decline in the USSR's growth rate, but as Mr. Berliner admits, it does enhance economic efficiency, while the supply of capital goods on long-term credits provides the USSR with resources that it otherwise would not have.

4. In my article, I distinguished between technology and products, emphasizing that a control policy should seek primarily to prevent the flow of strategic technology to the Soviet Union. Grain does not fall into that category, and as I have already indicated, this is an area where a carrot-and-stick approach might prove effective in moderating Soviet behavior.

5. It is possible, of course, that the Soviets will starve their consumer sector further before they will cut military expenditures. But this is hardly an argument against forcing this choice upon them. Among the factors Mr. Berliner himself lists which diminish the Soviet threat are domestic failures and tensions which would be gravely aggravated by increased belt-tightening; witness Poland. Mr. Berliner conveniently emphasizes Soviet internal problems when it suits his argument and dismisses them when it doesn't.

Regarding the costs:

1. I never said that it would be a simple matter to gain the cooperation of our CoCom partners in a policy of export controls, only that the problem was sufficiently important to warrant strong leadership by the U.S. Obviously if one has Mr. Berliner's fanciful attitude concerning the U.S.-Soviet balance, it is not worth the effort. But I do not share his attitude here. In addition, we would not be asking our allies

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to enforce a trade embargo against the Soviet Union, only to cooperate in a policy of controls on key technologies and selected products. As I pointed out in my article, controlling technology transfers would have the effect of making the USSR less self-sufficient and therefore more dependent on the West for products. The result might actually be an increased volume of trade.

2. Soviet control over Eastern Europe depends essentially on force and to a lesser degree on economic leverage. To the degree that we weaken the Soviet Union, we loosen its control over its satellites; and as noted above, a Soviet oil shortage would also destabilize the Soviet bloc.

3. It is the export of technology, not its control, which increases unemployment in the West by creating competitors and encouraging self-sufficiency in the receiving country. Compensation trade is another drain on Western jobs. If the Soviets must turn to the West for oil and grain, among other things, they will have no choice but to export as much of their raw materials as possible.

4. An intelligently designed control policy, of the kind suggested by J. Fred Bucy, would streamline procedures by eliminating much of the time spent over performance specifications and end-use statements. But again, the cost in terms of bureaucratic interference in trade would have to be weighed in terms of the objectives to be achieved. Since Mr. Berliner does not think they are essential, he is not willing to pay any price to achieve them.

A last word concerning Lenin's prophecy which both Mr. Berliner and Mr. Sternheimer think was erroneous. Lenin made his prediction about selling the rope at a time when the Soviet economy was in a state of total collapse. Industry was in chaos, foreign and Russian skilled workers had fled abroad, production had virtually ceased. The Bolshevik regime faced a crisis that could have been fatal to its survival. It was at this point that Western businessmen and technicians were called in to put the economy back on its feet. Since that time the Soviet Union has become the world's mightiest military power which has, in the last four years alone, installed Communist regimes in seven countries, from Africa to the Middle East to Southeast Asia.

Throughout the decades since Lenin made his prediction, the West has supplied the Soviet Union with capital, technology, advanced equipment, and technical training which have been fed into the Soviet military machine. It is all "sheer madness," as Adam B. Ulam says. But the process continues unabated and may speed up in the immediate future with the appointment of a businessman (former IBM President Thomas J. Watson) as Ambassador to Moscow. Lenin was wrong about many things, not least about the future of "socialism" in Russia. And while his prediction about capitalist assistance to Russia may not have been prophetic, since such assistance was going on for many centuries before the revolution, it was nonetheless correct.

Finally, I did not quote Daniel Yergin out of context. At several points in the article in question, he writes that trade will encourage liberalization in the Soviet Union. The political costs of trade to the Soviet Union, he writes, involve "some mild mellowing of the domestic political order." Expanding economic ties, he adds, led to the Helsinki agreement which has had as its "most important" benefit to the West "a freer flow of communication." In his concluding paragraph he states that "the Soviets are more likely to be responsive to Western concerns about human rights in the context of expanding economic relations." If he feels he was wrong, there are more graceful ways to say so than to claim that he was misquoted.

"The Unknown War"

To the Editor of Commentary:

In my article on *The Unknown War* ["World War II—Soviet Style," May], I neglected to acknowledge the generous help of Professor Alexander Nekrich of the Harvard Russian Research Center. Professor Nekrich is a distinguished historian who left the USSR for America three years ago. In 1965 he gained considerable attention in the USSR as well as in the West when his book, *22 June 1941*, was published in Moscow. In it, Professor Nekrich described the army purges and numerous strategic blunders by Stalin as contributing to the overwhelming success of the German invasion. Nekrich's book, however, came out at an inconvenient time, for Brezhnev and his colleagues were in the process of reversing the modest de-Stalinization of Khrushchev's regime. Nekrich's book was denounced by historians and military personnel at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow. (A report of the meeting can be found in the Samizdat Archives.) Over a year later, in July 1967, Professor Nekrich was removed from the Communist party.

This past year, as *The Unknown War* was appearing in Boston on WNAC-TV (Channel 7), the station responded to the controversial series by inviting Professor Nekrich to join a panel discussion about the program. The series was defended by John Lord, who was credited with writing the script, and by Rod McKuen, who was billed as script consultant. During the discussion, as Professor Nekrich was exposing the script's falsification of history by raising issues I would later expand in my own article, he was interrupted by Rod McKuen, who then proceeded to impugn Professor Nekrich's scholarly credentials. At one point Mr. McKuen claimed that he had been accused of being a Communist (which was a figment of his poetic imagination) and then introduced expressions which the station had to bleep.

As I explained in my article, I found the series to be a distorted and misinforming report of the Soviet-German conflict. In defending their script, the producers, to my knowledge, have not offered a more convincing argument than Mr. McKuen's bluster.

Joshua Rubenstein
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Welfare Reform

To the Editor of Commentary:

Leslie Lenkowsky's article, "Welfare Reform and the Liberals" [March], is a brilliant and courageous discussion of a complex and sensitive issue. Federal bureaucrats and legislators who are serious about welfare reform should heed its message that the liberal infatuation with a national minimum income is "at best . . . an inadequate objective, at worst . . . an inappropriate one."

Yet I wish Mr. Lenkowsky had paid a bit more attention to the liberal tendency to ignore certain urgent problems in the present welfare system and to place certain reform proposals wholly outside the domain of legitimate discussion. In the first category one must put the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heavy fiscal burden that has been shouldered by state and local taxpayers in states such as New York and California which have tried to provide a measure of decency for their least fortunate citizens and the illiberal reaction that has resulted from the failure of the national government to assume more of this burden. Many of the Californians voting for Proposition 13 thought they were voting against high welfare costs.

Into the second category goes the proposition that able-bodied welfare recipients for whom no regular job is available might reasonably be expected to perform useful services for their community in return for cash benefits, provided that adequate arrangements can be made to care for their children. This is already the practice in some localities for recipients of general assistance —a program that entails no federal financial participation—and the state of Utah has obtained permission from HEW to operate its programs of Aid to Families with Dependent Children in this way, although other states have had similar requests turned down in Washington.

Why should it be unreasonable to deny this option to states wanting to try it? To be sure, a "regular" job is far preferable, but is enforced idleness better than constructive activity? Yet the conventional liberal wisdom dubs this "slavefare" and refuses even to discuss it.

As the 96th Congress reopens the subject of welfare reform, the one thing that is clear is that no uniform national program yet devised has social benefits that outweigh its costs. Why, therefore, feign confidence in such schemes and require them of everyone, rather than admit uncertainty and permit a wide range of variations to be tried?

CHESTER E. FINN, JR.
Chevy Chase, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I marvel that a fundamental fact about welfare is so often understated: nationwide, with rare exceptions, the only people on welfare are the financially eligible (i.e., the very poor—the disabled, the elderly, and families with young children, invariably headed by women). The able-bodied single male (or female) or able-bodied father on welfare is almost pure propaganda or myth. Therefore, most people on welfare are not able (or free) to work.

The issue, then, is not jobs vs. welfare, but jobs for the unemployed who cannot get welfare. The entwined issue (also widely understated) is that many, if not most, people who are unemployed do not have jobs because there are no jobs for them. This was spectacularly true during the earlier 1970's and is still true today . . . though in somewhat less painful degree. . . .

Logically, some young families may deliberately split up to enable the mother and children to receive welfare when the fathers cannot get jobs. Logically, too, the strains of poverty (on health and morale) in low-income homes can lead to broken homes. Freer sexual practices and the opportunity for subsistence survival on welfare may also lead to more unwed mothers being on welfare.

Whatever the precipitating factors, it seems to me that more insight is needed even in those cases in which Leslie Lenkowsky claims welfare has "actually encouraged the poor to fit themselves to the requirements."

The fruits of welfare may be "increasingly generous," but they are still so full of pits that we must ask the poor themselves (the most valid kind of research) why they want or need them. . . .

Most importantly, the findings of such research and the facts on the job market and on welfare should be made known to the public.

GWEN GILLMORE
Northampton, Massachusetts

LESLIE LENKOWSKY writes:

It is reassuring to know that not everyone in the vicinity of the nation's capital subscribes to the conventional wisdom on welfare reform. Chester E. Finn, Jr.'s letter discusses two ideas that have not found much favor among liberal reformers lately. The first is the importance of fiscal relief; insofar as it enables states such as New York or California to hold the line on or even reduce taxes or to maintain vital public services, assumption of a greater share of local welfare costs by the federal government might make a real contribution to the reduction of poverty and dependency. The second is the value of "make-work"; even the sorts of jobs provided by community programs like Utah's may be more beneficial for welfare recipients than staying at home until "suitable" work comes along. Mr. Finn's suggestion that these ideas be tried is appropriate, but unless he has some like-minded friends in Congress or the executive branch, it is unlikely that they will come to pass.

Gwen Gillmore's view that most people on welfare cannot work might have commanded wide agreement when our current public-assistance programs were established in 1935, and even for some time afterward, but it hardly can today. Today, well over half of all female heads of families with young children are already in the labor force, so it cannot be presumed that they are incapable of working. (Nor can it automatically be assumed that many of the disabled and elderly are unable to work.) Indeed, one of the least known facts about welfare mothers is the number who *do* work. Long-term studies of welfare recipients show that a relatively small proportion are chronically on relief; the rest go off the welfare rolls for a variety of reasons, including employment. In addition, the rules now governing the program encourage welfare mothers to work while they receive some benefits, and many do.

Although the number of jobs in the American economy has been increasing at a spectacular rate in recent years, Miss Gillmore maintains that there are still not enough. That may well be true, since the number and kind of jobs are never likely to be adequate for everyone who can or wants to work. But the more important issue is whether the income available from welfare enables some recipients to shun perfectly decent, low-paying jobs of the sort held by many people who are not on welfare. Research on this would certainly be helpful, and it is essential, as Miss Gillmore notes, that the findings be publicized, even when they do not support the pet schemes of welfare reformers.

Arab Studies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I believe that Seth Cropsey's article, "Arab Money and the Universities" [April], was uninformed and unfair to Georgetown University and its Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and to my own scholarly work.

While we at the center are grateful for the generosity of the Libyan

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sex Man Time

Sex is man's link to time: to his fathers, to the centuries, to the generations that have gone before and will come after.

Utilitarian population planners offer the promise of sex without life—a solution that spells the end to meaningful human existence on this planet.

Non-Sectarian Committee for Life
Post Office Box 412
Larchmont, New York 10538

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and other Arab governments, we do not honor these governments by accepting their grants. In the case of the Libyan grant, the person honored was not Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, but Umar al-Mukhtar, a revered Libyan patriot and religious leader who led the resistance to the Italian occupation of Libya. We are happy to join with the Libyans in honoring Umar al-Mukhtar.

The center strictly observes the university's principles on fund raising. We have not solicited, nor have we been offered, any grant from an Arab or an American source that has had any strings whatever attached to it. The university has exercised exclusive control over the designation of all faculty and staff connected with the center and will continue to do so. As for the Iraqi grant, President Healy planned to use it for an Islamic philosophy position that was subsequently funded from other sources.

While the U.S. Office of Education was erroneously listed as a center supporter in one of our early reports, it has never supported the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. It has supported the Near East Language and Area Center, which is administered in Georgetown's School of Languages and Linguistics. The grants to the latter center have made it possible, among other things, for Georgetown to offer Hebrew, Turkish, and Persian; and we in the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies both benefit from and contribute to Georgetown's overall competence in the Middle East as a whole. The university also accepts funds from the Jewish Community Council of greater Washington for a visiting Israeli professor in the government department. The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, however, will not accept funds which stipulate the nationality or national origin of the teacher. We welcome applications to our Master's Program in Arab Studies from all qualified applicants, regardless of religion, race, sex, or national origins.

As for Mr. Cropsey's out-of-context quotations on the treatment of Libya in my book, *Arab Politics*, I can only urge your readers to read the entire section and also to note how I compare Libya with other political systems in the Arab world. While I believe that there have been significant positive developments under the revolutionary regime—a great improvement over the corrupt monarchy that it overthrew—I also describe serious problems of legitimacy and participation and classify it as an unstable system. Anybody with a serious interest in understanding Libya would do better to read my book than to listen to Art Buchwald, whom Mr. Cropsey quotes.

Mr. Cropsey's reporting of the views of Clovis Maksoud would have been considerably improved by noting that Dr. Maksoud's interpretation of the motivation for Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon is widely shared by other observers, including reporters on the Washington *Post*. In this connection, it is time Mr. Cropsey learned that it is not "pro-Arab" to be critical of Israeli policy or action.

Finally, Mr. Cropsey's implication that Georgetown has "relaxed or waived" its "academic standards" in pursuit of contributions from Arab sources is too serious a charge to be leveled (and to be printed) without the facts. Should Mr. Cropsey or any of your readership wish to learn the facts of our academic program and standards, we would be pleased to hear from them or be visited by them.

MICHAEL C. HUDSON
Director, Center for
Contemporary Arab Studies
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

SETH CROPSEY writes:

Michael C. Hudson claims that Georgetown does not honor its foreign donors by accepting their money. This is at best self-deception. The honor of being a benefactor to a valuable institution is in fact an important motive in making gifts. If it were not, there would be no disgrace in having a gift rejected by the intended beneficiary, and there would similarly be no objection like the one raised at Harvard this spring to the donations of an entrepreneur who maintained important South African holdings.

Beyond the issue of whether one approves a benefactor by accepting his gift is the more complicated issue of how the gift is put to use. Under ideal circumstances, universities express their gratitude to donors by pursuing the standard of academic objectivity they both claim to revere. This changes when a university confuses its essential purpose with that of a government agency, private business, or foreign government.

Mr. Hudson's remonstrances notwithstanding, his praise of Colonel Qaddafi in *Arab Politics* is extravagant, and its appearance in a scholarly work makes a thoughtful reader wonder about the author's ongoing relationship with his subject and with his center's benefactor, the government of Libya.

Clovis Maksoud's interpretation of Israel's motives in invading southern Lebanon raises the same issue. Whether Washington *Post* reporters share his view that territorial gains were Israel's true aim is as irrelevant as whether it is "pro-Arab" to criticize Israeli policy. The point is that Mr. Maksoud presented his opinion publicly as an official of a university which is indebted to the very foreign government whose political positions his remarks support.

In his haste to uphold his colleague's political arguments, Mr. Hudson demonstrates an insensitivity to the real, and larger, issue of the connection between a university's sources of support and its ideological inclinations. In my article I stated that such insensitivity will force universities to become ideological battlegrounds. By calling attention to the fact that Georgetown "also accepts funds from the Jewish Community Council of greater Washington for a visiting Israeli professor," Mr. Hudson inadvertently reveals that Georgetown has taken something of a lead in that direction.

Music Criticism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel Lipman's articles are always extraordinarily good, but in "Yesterday's New Music" [March] he outdoes himself. To make sense out of some of the affectations that pass for music is indeed a notable achievement. . . .

HENRIETTA GLICK
Chicago, Illinois

Homosexuality, Cont.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am quite content to let your readers decide whether I have misrepresented Samuel McCracken's views, or he mine: and indeed which of us may be hysterical and prejudiced [Letters from Readers, April, in a discussion of Mr. McCracken's article, "Are Homosexuals Gay?," January]. It seems clear in any event that Mr. Mc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cracken's intemperate outburst is hardly a model of that reasonableness and stability which he finds lacking in his critics.

What remains worth repeating, for those who are persuaded by Mr. McCracken's reductionist arguments as well as the unregenerate lot who may not be, is that human sexuality is in all its aspects extraordinarily complicated; that the transition from childhood to mature masculinity or femininity defies sophisticated analysis, let alone snap judgments; and that the easy dicta of popular prejudice, even when trotted out in the guise of a purportedly even-handed inquiry, do not much advance our understanding. It should be obvious even to Mr. McCracken that among his acquaintance are individuals, both happy and unhappy, who may be homosexuals without his being aware of the fact. If he wishes to deal seriously with the entire question of homosexuality, he could start by asking those of his friends he has identified as homosexual whether they are in fact as wretched and self-destructive as he claims. If they are, he might then ask them why. Starting from this admittedly small sample, he might possibly arrive at some larger truths about sexuality altogether—and perhaps in the process come to appreciate some of the needs and difficulties that have made his friends the human beings they are.

If such an exercise fails to enlighten Mr. McCracken as to the total nature of the phenomenon he claims to be exploring, it may at least teach him an appropriate humility: it was, after all, St. Thomas Aquinas who observed that "knowledge depends on the capacity of the knower; for what is known is in the knower according to the measure of his capacity."

A.J. SHERMAN

New York City

SAMUEL MCCRACKEN writes:

In his original letter, A. J. Sherman, among other misrepresentations, characterized my position—which includes opposition to laws discriminating against homosexual teachers—as "firmly in the camp of the ideologues of the Third Reich." He also claimed that I ignored "the amply-documented fact that over 90 per cent of child molestation cases concern heterosexuals"; the plain fact is that I alluded to this truth not once but twice in my article, using it as part of my justification for opposing the laws advocated by Anita Bryant.

I am not surprised that Mr. Sherman now pleads *nolo contendere* to a charge of misrepresentation.

As for my temperateness, it is of course difficult to argue with a reader over the effect one's writing has had on him. I restrained myself in the composition of my answers, and the final text was certainly more irenic than my first thoughts. If the result suggests that I need more practice in temperateness, I shall not go to school to Mr. Sherman, whose idea of temperateness is to call one a Nazi.

(In this connection, I might note the astonishing intemperateness of the reaction in San Francisco to the verdict in the Moscone-Milk murder trial. Intemperate not merely those who rioted and vandalized throughout the night, but also those who defended the riots and said that Dan White ought to have received a severer sentence, up to and including death. Although only someone present at the entire trial should form an opinion on the verdict, if the jury saw the testimony as its members reported it did—that is, as providing no evidence of premeditation—it could have brought in no other verdict. Suppose that Dan White were a homosexual, had done the same two killings, received the same sentence, and that mobs of heterosexuals had rioted with signs reading "Kill Dan White!" Would it not have needed all the art of a Gore Vidal to chronicle such excesses of the Heterosexual Dictatorship?)

If, as Mr. Sherman alleges, human sexuality defies even sophisticated analysis, then it is a mystery beyond mere human knowing, and we both might as well return to less taxing matters. But he is apparently undaunted by his own pessimism, for he suggests that even I, with appropriate field work, might begin to know a little of the truth.

Mr. Sherman may be right that among my homosexual friends are some I do not recognize as such. Having raised the possibility, he immediately drops it, moving on to suggest that I conduct sexual research among those of my friends whom I know to be homosexual. I am astonished that Mr. Sherman, who believes that I wish to place such people in concentration camps, thinks any are my friends.

He errs in also believing that I think all of them "wretched and self-destructive." The fact is, as is clear from my article, the majority of them are no such thing. And when I judge some of them to be thus troubled, I make the judgment not on the basis of their homosexuality but rather on the basis of such phenomena as suicide attempts and acute alcoholism. Whatever their sexual preference, there is no point in my asking people so afflicted whether they are really happy and self-fulfilled.

Mr. Sherman quotes St. Thomas to good effect. He might ponder whether the cited epistemological observation may be so universal as to apply even to himself.

Ignazio Silone

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his will, my late husband, Ignazio Silone, bequeathed his archives and correspondence to me, on the understanding that I make them "available to future scholars." Shortly before his death, he specifically asked me to publish whatever I thought important.

I have, therefore, decided—on the basis of the archives but with a great deal of other material that I must find elsewhere—to write his biography, as a source-book, in several annotated volumes.

For this task I shall need the help of all who knew Ignazio Silone and who would be so kind as to let me have their reminiscences of him; also of anyone owning letters from him who would not mind sending me photostat copies (since I must edit and publish his correspondence); also of anyone possessing, or knowing how to find, articles, etc. by him or concerning him. Such material should be sent to me by registered mail at Casella Postale 7196, Nomentano, 00161 Rome, Italy.

I need not say how grateful I should be for any help of this kind, which would be immediately acknowledged.

DARINA SILONE

Rome, Italy

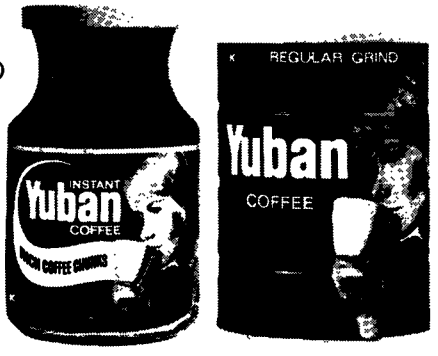
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wouldn't you like to see your husband reach for a second cup?

Then change to rich Yuban® -for richness worth a second cup.

I did. It used to bother me when my husband kept turning down a second cup. Because I'm too good a wife not to care about good coffee. So I changed to Yuban. It's extra rich taste comes from extra rich beans—like sun ripened beans from Colombia, some of the world's richest coffee beans. That's Yuban—for richness worth a second cup.

Yuban®
The Simcha Coffee



CERTIFIED KOSHER

The premium coffee of General Foods

GF
GENERAL FOODS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ten Questions about SALT II

As part of a campaign for ratification of the SALT II agreement, ten questions and answers pertaining to the treaty have been sent by the Carter administration to all members of the United States Senate. These questions and answers appear below, followed in each case by a critique by EDWARD N. LUTTWAK, *who is research professor at Georgetown University and senior fellow at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. Mr. Luttwak, a regular contributor to* COMMENTARY, *is a professional defense consultant and has written widely on strategic and military issues. His publications in this area include* The Strategic Balance; The US-USSR Nuclear Weapons Balance; *and* Strategic Power: Military Capabilities and Political Utility.

1. What specifically will the Russians have to destroy as a result of SALT II? Won't they destroy only their oldest launchers?

Administration: The emerging SALT II agreement will require the Soviets to reduce their force by more than 250 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles—over 10 per cent of current Soviet force levels. This reduction is important militarily because of the destructive power these systems represent. It is important politically because it concerns an important political measure of strategic capability and the central goal of equality in numbers of systems mandated in the Senate resolution approving the SALT I agreement. Moreover, these reductions are symbolically important because they set a precedent for further reductions in the future.

As an example of the military significance of the systems to be reduced, they are capable of destroying the largest 250 cities in the United States. The launchers reduced will clearly be the older systems in the current Soviet inventory, but these systems are by no means decrepit. They include ICBM's that are the same vintage as our Minuteman II missiles and SLBM's that are newer than our Polaris. The bombers to be reduced include the only all-jet bombers in the Soviet force.

More important, without the ceilings provided by the treaty, the Soviets would not only maintain and probably modernize these delivery vehicles but, based on past performance, they would be likely to increase their force size by adding new systems. The resulting force would not only be substantially larger than 2,250—perhaps by a third—but would have far greater destructive power, throw-weight, and warhead levels.

Politically, the reductions achieve equality in numbers of strategic systems at lower levels. The Senate recognized the importance of this measure by mandating equality in numbers in approving the SALT I Interim Agreement. The value of these reductions cannot be depreciated. In their absence, it could be politically necessary for the U.S. to build up to projected Soviet force levels. This numbers race would cost billions of dollars —a major diversion of resources with no resultant increase in security.

Finally, a goal of the United States in SALT must be not simply to ratify the number of strategic delivery vehicles on the two sides, but to reduce these levels. The SALT II reductions are the critical first step in this process.

Luttwak: The SALT II agreement is advertised as imposing equal ceilings on intercontinental weapons of both sides. Since the United States has no more than 2,058 heavy bombers and ballistic missiles, while the Soviet Union has at least 2,504, a genuine equality would require the elimination of more than 400 Soviet weapons. In fact, a Soviet-desired ceiling of 2,400 units has been accepted, and various bookkeeping devices are now being used to justify the claim of equality. For example, some 220 old B-52 bombers in storage (some actually disassembled) are counted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the American total, even though they have no military value whatsoever.

Under the terms of the SALT II agreement, both sides are to reduce their overall forces to 2,250 weapons by the end of 1981. It will be noted that bookkeeping tricks aside, the United States is already below that ceiling. The Soviet Union, however, will have to eliminate some 250 weapons. The administration claims that this is a very important provision of the agreement. In fact, the Soviet weapons to be withdrawn consist of rather primitive ballistic missiles, comparable to U.S. Minuteman I ICBM's (*unilaterally* withdrawn a decade ago) and Mya-4 jet bombers built in the 1950's which are now quite decrepit. The Russians will certainly not lose any real military options: they have plenty of high-grade missile capability in their large new ICBM's, and to replace the antique Mya-4's they have brand-new Backfire bombers, which have artificially been excluded from the SALT II ceilings.

When the U.S. Senate in 1972 mandated an equality in numbers for any new SALT agreement, it could scarcely have expected that an American administration would join the Soviet Union in contriving arbitrary definitions of what is and what is not a "strategic" weapon in order to achieve a spurious numerical equality.

By linking the important and highly desirable principle of force reductions to grossly unbalanced definitions, the SALT II agreement perverts what could have been a useful precedent for the future. The Russians now know that if they keep obsolete and practically worthless weapons in their nominal weapons inventory, the United States will sooner or later reward them by making real and painful concessions in exchange for their withdrawal.

2. Are multiple protective structure (MPS) mobile ICBM systems using vertical shelters permitted under SALT? What is the Soviet view of this issue?

Administration: The Soviet side and the U.S. side have agreed on language in the SALT II treaty that states explicitly that mobile ICBM launchers are permitted after the Protocol expires. We have made clear that this language includes the various basing concepts we have been considering, including those, such as the MPS systems, in which missiles with their canister launchers are moved among shelters which might themselves be hardened. The Soviets have expressed the view that they do not see how the number of launchers in an MPS-type system could be verified and suggested that such a system would appear to involve construction of additional ICBM silo launchers. We have made clear that we do not accept these objections as valid.

With regard to verification, we recognize that there are additional difficulties connected with the monitoring of numbers of deployed mobile launchers, compared with such monitoring of fixed launchers, and that any new U.S. or Soviet mobile ICBM systems are subject to the SALT ban on deliberate concealment measures which impede verification of compliance with the provisions of the agreement. As a consequence of this prohibition, we must insure that any mobile ICBM system which we deploy will permit adequate verification of the number of launchers deployed, and we will insist that any Soviet system meet the same verification standards. (It is noteworthy that these same requirements apply to SLBM launchers where the location of deployed launchers is concealed and the sides depend on observation of submarine construction to determine the number of launchers.)

We are confident that the various mobile ICBM options we are considering would meet these verification requirements.

We do not accept the Soviet claim that the shelters in an MPS system would constitute additional ICBM silo launchers, since the MPS system we are considering employs a mobile canister launcher. The basis for classifying the MPS system as mobile is that essentially all the equipment required to launch the missile, as well as the missile itself, is moved together periodically from one shelter to another—with the shelter providing a protected launch location. (The hardened shelter alone cannot launch a missile.) This assessment would apply irrespective of the type or orientation of the shelters in which the launcher and its missile are deployed (horizontal, vertical, trench).

The United States has both publicly and privately made clear that the various mobile ICBM systems we are considering, including ones in which the launch point would itself be hardened, will be permitted to either side during the post-Protocol period. We accept the requirement that mobile ICBM deployment must permit adequate verification of the number of launchers deployed and have designed the MPS system accordingly. We do not plan to seek Soviet blessing of our designs and similarly are not asking the Soviets to submit their mobile ICBM designs for our review.

The responsibilities of both sides on this matter are clear. There can be no question on the part of either side as to the interpretation which will govern U.S. actions under the provisions of the SALT II agreement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Luttwak: There is a fundamental difference between the two parties to the SALT II agreement: while the Soviet Union is a closed and unusually secretive society, the United States is virtually transparent. The Russians can easily find out exactly how many and what sort of strategic weapons the U.S. has, and will have, merely by reading the *Congressional Record*. By contrast, to keep track of Soviet weapons the U.S. must rely on the sometimes uncertain data of satellite and other remote sensors. Nevertheless, the fiction has been maintained that the two sides are in an equal position as far as intelligence is concerned. As a result, when the Soviets argued that the "multiple protective structure" (MPS) basing mode for MX would violate the SALT II agreement (on the grounds that they would not be able to determine the number of actual missiles involved), their objection was not rejected out of hand, as it should have been. Instead, the American side has apparently followed the discredited "unilateral statement" formula in claiming the right to deploy a new ICBM in the MPS (or now "sunroof") mode, subject to adequate verification rules. ("We accept the requirement that mobile ICBM's must permit adequate verification . . .".)

Having seen the B-1 program cancelled unilaterally, the Russians obviously hope that the administration will sooner or later abandon the MX program also. Their objection to MPS was a friendly contribution to the unilateralist faction inside the Carter administration.

3. Why are the Soviets permitted a 308-0 advantage in heavy ICBM's?

Administration: The U.S. gave up the rights to modern heavy ICBM's in the course of the SALT I negotiations and agreed to continue this situation in SALT II quite simply because our military planners have absolutely no interest in such missiles. By giving up our rights to modern heavy ICBM's, which we do not need and would not build, we were able to gain important concessions in other areas. In particular, this bargaining chip was used in the negotiations at Vladivostok in 1974 to get the Soviets to drop their insistence on limits on U.S. European-based aircraft and the nuclear systems of U.S. allies.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that the Soviet advantage in heavy ICBM's only applies to *silo-based* ICBM's. Neither side is permitted heavy *mobile* ICBM's or heavy SLBM's. We could have retained the option to deploy unlimited numbers of heavy *mobile* ICBM's since this option was still open in the treaty in the fall of 1978. We recognized that keeping this option would have been attractive politically in offsetting arguments about the Soviet advantage in *silo-based* heavy ICBM's. At the same time, it was possible that the Soviets might some day exercise this option. We weighed this issue and with the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed to the Soviets that heavy mobile ICBM's and heavy SLBM's be banned. The Soviets accepted.

Another important factor is that the treaty will allow us to build a missile of equivalent effectiveness to the Soviet heavy ICBM's. The Soviets will be permitted a maximum of 10 warheads on their heavy missiles, the same number we will be permitted on our MX missiles which will have better accuracy. Thus, they will not be able to exploit the greater payload of their heavy missiles in any meaningful fashion.

Luttwak: Much of the destabilizing Soviet throw-weight advantage derives from the heavy ICBM's in the Soviet force. SALT II would allow the Soviet Union to deploy 308 heavy modern ICBM's (SS-18's) as against zero for the United States. Once fully deployed, the SS-18 force alone would have a throw-weight of more than *four-and-one-half-million pounds* (by the lowest estimate) as compared to *two million pounds* for the entire U.S. ICBM force; and then of course the Soviet ICBM force includes another 1,090 ICBM's (SS-11's, 17's, 19's) on top of that.

The administration claims that the 308-to-zero advantage in heavy ICBM's was exchanged for an important Soviet concession ("to get the Soviets to drop their insistence on limits on U.S. European-based aircraft and the nuclear systems of U.S. allies"). In other words, in Act I the United States freely agrees not to count Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles deployed against our allies; in Act II the Soviet Union extracts this major concession for the nuclear systems of U.S. allies which are deployed to match those same medium-range missiles. And again, in Act I the United States agrees that the Backfire is not a "strategic weapon"; in Act II the Soviets have to be given a major concession to "drop their insistence" that our F-111's (with less than half the range of Backfire) are strategic weapons. True, the F-111's are forward-based in the United Kingdom; equally true, however, is the fact that the Backfires do not need to be forward-deployed in order to reach the United States.

The administration points out that we have not built heavy ICBM's as a matter of choice. True. In fact, Air Force planners wanted a balanced force-structure, with a modern medium-sized MX missile and a modern and versatile B-1 bomber. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

administration then proceeded to cancel the B-1 bomber without even trying to trade it for Soviet concessions, and it has delayed procurement of the MX till this day. In other words, the Soviet planners chose to invest in heavy ICBM's; ours chose to invest in the B-1 and the MX. *They* have their SS-18 heavy ICBM's fully operational, while *we* have only cancellations and endless reassessments.

The administration takes pride in having persuaded the Soviet Union to ban heavy *mobile* ICBM's and heavy SLBM's. In fact, a heavy missile as large as the 120-foot long SS-18 can scarcely be made mobile at all anyway. As for heavy SLBM's, a definition of these is eagerly awaited, since the current Soviet SSN-18 SLBM is already very large indeed, and already has a throw-weight/range greater than that of the future U.S. Trident C-4.

4. Since the Backfire bomber can reach targets in the continental U.S., why shouldn't it be included in SALT?

Administration: The Soviet Union is currently deploying Backfires in both their long-range air force and in naval aviation units. The Backfire bomber has been in production for several years, and current production averages two and a half aircraft a month. We continue to believe that the primary purpose of the Backfire is to perform peripheral attack and naval missions. Undoubtedly, this aircraft has some intercontinental capability in that it can surely reach the United States from home bases on a one-way, high-altitude, subsonic, unrefueled flight; with refueling and Arctic staging, it can probably, with certain high-altitude cruise flight profiles, execute a two-way mission to much of the United States.

The ability to strike the territory of the other side is not the criterion for determining whether an aircraft is a "heavy bomber" and, thus, subject to the limitations in the SALT II agreement. For example, the U.S. has 67 FB-111's which are part of our strategic bomber force and dedicated to attack on the Soviet Union. We also have over 500 aircraft deployed in the European and Pacific theaters which have the capability to strike Soviet territory. The Soviet Union at one time tried to get these latter aircraft included in SALT on the grounds that they could strike the Soviet Union. With the firm support of our allies, we adamantly resisted that position on the grounds that these aircraft, whatever their theoretical capability, are deployed for theater missions and, thus, not subject to SALT limitations. The Soviets have used this same argument with respect to the Backfire.

Nevertheless, the Soviets have agreed to furnish specific assurances concerning the Backfire. The U.S. regards the obligations undertaken by these assurances as integral to the treaty. These assurances, which include a freeze on the current Backfire production rate, are consistent with the U.S. objective of constraining the strategic potential of the Backfire force, while continuing to exclude our own European and Pacific-based theater aircraft from SALT. Those assurances also help to restrict the Backfire to a theater role. In particular, limiting the numbers available means that Soviet diversion of Backfire from its theater and naval missions to a strategic role would substantially reduce Soviet strength in these areas while adding only marginally to overall Soviet strategic capability.

Luttwak: The Backfire bomber looks like a strategic bomber, flies like a strategic bomber, and could definitely strike at targets in the United States as a strategic bomber. Only in the text of the treaty is the Backfire not a "strategic" bomber.

The administration asserts that it agreed not to include Backfires in the overall SALT II weapon ceilings in exchange for Soviet agreement to a similar exclusion of the FB-111's on our side. The Russians are producing some 30 Backfires a year with some 150 already built; we have long since stopped building FB-111's and have a total of only 67; the Backfire is also about three times as large as the FB-111 and has more than twice the range, with a larger payload.

More important still is the underlying inequality in air defenses. To get through the 2,500 Soviet interceptor fighters and 12,000 Soviet anti-aircraft missiles, American bombers need special weapons, large ECM payloads, lots of range (for evasion), and a great deal of fortitude. To attack targets in the United States, Soviet bombers need only to get here, since we have no deployed surface-to-air missiles at all and only 309 active interceptor fighters, a derisory force by any estimate. As a result, while Backfire bombers would not perhaps be sufficiently capable for our own purposes against the Soviet Union, they are definitely more than adequate for Soviet attacks against us.

The administration stresses the fact that the Soviet Union has given us verbal assurances that the Backfires would not be used in a strategic role. This introduces a novel standard in arms control: can anyone imagine a scenario in which the Russians would *want* to bomb the U.S. targets with Backfires but would then refrain from doing so because they had given such "assurances" in SALT? Verification is supposed to regulate concrete capabilities, not vapid "assurances."

There is merit in the administration's claim

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that Backfires would be more effective in the theater role (against Europeans, Chinese, and U.S. forces overseas) than in executing attacks over intercontinental ranges. That is true of any aircraft, or indeed of any vehicle: the shorter the range of the mission, the easier to get there, and the greater the payload that can be carried.

The real issue is the very unsound precedent that would be created in our arms-control dealings with the Russians. They *know* that we know that the Backfires should in fact be counted under the overall SALT weapon ceiling; now they also know that we can be maneuvered into distortions of the criteria of definition, in their favor. This will confirm the Soviets in their judgment that in dealings with the U.S. a tough diplomatic stance sooner or later results in American concessions, no matter what the merits of the case might be.

5. Won't our Minuteman missiles be vulnerable to a Soviet first-strike under SALT II? What good is SALT if it couldn't solve this problem?

Administration: SALT did not produce the Minuteman vulnerability problem. With or without SALT, our Minuteman missiles will become increasingly vulnerable to attack by Soviet ICBM's. This situation is the result of Soviet advances in missile accuracy, coupled with the deployment of large numbers of MIRVed ICBM's. The issue of Minuteman vulnerability must be viewed in perspective. As Secretary of Defense Harold Brown has stated, the vulnerability of the Minuteman—a serious problem requiring corrective action by the U.S.—"would not be synonymous with the vulnerability of the United States or even of the strategic deterrent." Any Soviet planner must realize that even a successful attack on the Minuteman would still leave the Soviet Union vulnerable to massive response by our submarines and heavy bombers. The damage these remaining forces could do, to military, political, and industrial targets in the Soviet Union, would be devastating.

The inability of SALT to solve the Minuteman vulnerability problem, largely a consequence of substantial MIRV deployments on both sides and the infeasibility of formulating verifiable limits constraining missile accuracy, testifies to the fact that some strategic problems are not amenable to solution in SALT but must be solved by unilateral U.S. action under a vigorous strategic-forces modernization program.

SALT does make it more feasible, however, to consider mobile ICBM systems as an alternative basing mode for ICBM's. Without the SALT II limits on MIRVed ICBM's and the number of warheads per missile, a multiple protective structure (MPS) mobile ICBM system would face much more serious feasibility problems from the standpoint of both cost and land availability. Similarly, the viability of the air-mobile ICBM basing mode is also improved through the limitations in the SALT II agreement.

Because we do maintain a balanced strategic-nuclear force of land-based ICBM's, submarine-launched missiles, and heavy bombers, we are in a position to take the time to evaluate judiciously and deliberately implement alternative, more survivable, ICBM basing modes to replace the increasingly vulnerable fixed ICBM.

Luttwak: The purpose of arms control is, or should be, to control arms. Since the United States has a comparative advantage in developing high-technology weapons, the only justification for accepting parity in strategic-nuclear forces would be to achieve genuine and substantial arms control. Thus, if the Soviet Union and the United States had reached an agreement which actually limited strategic arms, and if equality had truly been achieved, there would be equal ICBM throw-weights and the Minuteman vulnerability problem would have receded. The Soviets could not threaten our Minuteman force if they only had the same missile throw-weight that we have. What creates a problem now is the fact that the Soviet ICBM force is several times as large in throw-weight as the American, and this potential is increasingly exploited in the deployment of large numbers of accurate and very powerful warheads.

Under SALT II we get the worst of both worlds: there is no real control on the most important threat, and we must therefore undertake the great effort of protecting our ICBM force. On the other hand, a number of Soviet-desired restrictions have been imposed on our technological abilities, thus making remedial measures much more expensive and difficult than would otherwise have been the case. Without the SALT II restrictions, it would be much easier to cope with the Minuteman vulnerability problem.

As it is, we have to tread the thin (and very expensive) line between the demands of verification (which means that the missiles must be seen, in order to be counted) and the necessity of protection (which means that the missiles must be concealed).

An active defense of the missile silos would offer by far the most effective (and cost-effective) solution to the vulnerability problem. This is now ruled out by the 1972 ABM treaty. But we signed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that treaty in the *declared* presumption that the next SALT agreement would seriously limit Soviet ICBM throw-weights. If SALT II is ratified, we will not have controlled Soviet throw-weights, and we will still be prevented from defending the Minuteman silos by means of ABM weapons. This is doubly unfortunate, since nowadays ABM techniques are available to protect ICBM silos at a cost much lower than the mobility-and-concealment schemes being considered by the administration. For example, the "trench-and-sunroof" scheme, in which MX missile transporters would be placed in concrete trenches with sliding roofs, would cost some $30 billion; a silo-defense ABM would by contrast be available for one-third that amount.

6. How do our NATO allies feel about SALT? Aren't they concerned about the lack of limits on such Soviet systems as the SS-20 IRBM? Aren't they concerned about continued U.S. cooperation on theater systems?

Administration: Allied support of SALT was evidenced recently by the strong statements made by allied leaders at the Guadeloupe summit meeting. German Chancellor Schmidt has urged early ratification on several occasions, while former British Prime Minister Callaghan declared that it would be tragic if the SALT II treaty were not ratified. French President Giscard d'Estaing also noted the need to move quickly to a conclusion of SALT II. This allied support at the highest levels reflects the continuing and close consultation which the U.S. has had with the allies throughout the conduct of the SALT II negotiations in order to insure that SALT II will fully protect allied as well as U.S. security interests.

While the SS-20 and the Backfire bomber are part of the Soviet arsenal which unquestionably does threaten Europe, NATO is confident that the alliance spectrum of conventional, theater-nuclear, and strategic forces remains an effective deterrent to aggression. Nevertheless, Soviet deployment of the SS-20 and the Backfire is a cause for concern. As a result, NATO is currently conducting an in-depth review of the issue of long-range theater-nuclear force modernization in order to insure that we can adequately respond to Soviet threats of both a military and political nature. This includes the possibility of new deployments of long-range theater-nuclear systems, as well as arms-control initiatives in this area, possibly within the context of SALT III.

We have assured our allies both privately and publicly that we will not permit the Soviets to use SALT as a vehicle for undermining continued close cooperation in the theater-nuclear area. The agreement will not affect existing patterns of collaboration and cooperation with our allies, nor will it preclude cooperation in modernization. We explicitly rejected a Soviet effort to prohibit the transfer of technology or systems in this area and have made clear to our allies that the non-circumvention provision in the agreement does not entail any additional obligations beyond those assumed in the agreement.

Luttwak: At a time when the Western world was being seriously threatened by multiple crises, including the troubles in Iran and Turkey, German Chancellor Schmidt, British Prime Minister Callaghan, and French President Giscard d'Estaing discovered that President Carter had called them to the Guadeloupe summit mainly to extract from them pro-SALT statements for the benefit of the TV cameras, and of Congress.

By now, only the naive remain deceived: it is plain that the European leaders must do business with the President of the United States, no matter who he is. They have urgent matters of their own to transact with the U.S., and they have powerful left-wing factions at home which are pressing for disarmament; both Schmidt and Callaghan must live with strong pro-disarmament factions within their own parties. As a result, if the President of the United States insists on parading their approval of SALT for the TV cameras, they will perform. But it is no secret that Chancellor Schmidt was dismayed by the fatal incoherence of the President's sense of priorities. As for President Giscard of France, he made his real opinion very clear indeed upon his return to Paris, when he flatly ruled out any French participation in SALT III.

A summit meeting can easily be manipulated, but the underlying strategic realities are not to be concealed: the Soviet build-up in "continental" weapons (notably the SS-20 missiles) presents a direct threat to NATO; the strategy of inaction followed by the Carter administration in the face of Soviet imperialism threatens the vital supplies of oil and scarce metals of the entire Western world; and the willful refusal to maintain the strength of U.S. strategic-nuclear forces undermines the credibility of the American guarantees on which the entire structure of the alliance is based. As far as Schmidt, Callaghan, and Giscard are concerned, those are the subjects which should have been raised at the Guadeloupe summit.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

7. Why did we accept the cruise-missile limits in the Protocol? Don't these limits affect only U.S. systems? Won't they set a precedent for follow-up negotiations?

Administration: In the course of the SALT II negotiations, it became clear that, in order to get an agreement that contained limits on certain Soviet strategic programs of interest to us, we would have to accept some limitations on cruise missiles. For air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM's), we had a clear idea about what type of limits would be acceptable for the period through 1985 and were able to reach agreement with the Soviets on ALCM limits in the 1985 portion of the treaty, which do not, in any way, constrain the ALCM options of interest to us. However, for ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCM's) and sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCM's) (that is, surface ship or submarine-launched), we were not prepared to accept long-term limitations.

Early in SALT II, the Soviets proposed that the treaty contain a ban on the testing and deployment of SLCM's with ranges over 600 km and later adopted the same position for GLCM's. We took the position that consideration of restrictive long-term limits on these systems should be postponed to future negotiations. However, the Soviets insisted that SALT II should contain some limits on SLCM's and GLCM's. When it became clear in the post-Vladivostok negotiations that an agreement could not be concluded without some SLCM and GLCM limits, the U.S. attempted to obtain Soviet agreement to a variety of packages limiting SLCM's and GLCM's. Eventually we agreed to accept some SLCM and GLCM limits in a short-term Protocol, not in the treaty itself. By this approach, we accommodated Soviet insistence that the agreement address SLCM's and GLCM's, while making certain that these limitations would have no impact on U.S. programs. The Protocol limits ban the deployment of SLCM's and GLCM's with ranges over 600 km but place no limit on development and testing, which can and are going forward.

Therefore, under the terms of the Protocol, the U.S. can continue its cruise-missile development program on schedule. We can test SLCM's and GLCM's to any range, while we have given up only the right to deploy such cruise missiles during the period of the Protocol—which we had no plans to do anyway. In the meantime, we can continue to analyze with our allies the potential role of SLCM's and GLCM's in long-range theater-nuclear force modernization and arms control. We consider this an acceptable outcome on this difficult issue.

Concerns about the precedential nature of the Protocol limits on SLCM's and GLCM's are totally unwarranted. The President would not accept any limits on SLCM's and GLCM's in future negotiations which were not in the interests of the U.S. and its allies. This means that any limitations on systems designed for theater missions would have to be accompanied by appropriate limitations on Soviet systems. Similarly, the United States Senate would have the opportunity to review and make their own judgments as to whether any future SLCM/GLCM limits that might be negotiated are in our national interest.

The history of SALT supports the conclusion that limits accepted in one agreement are not necessarily extended to another agreement unless they are judged to be in our national interest. For example, the original ABM treaty limited ABM deployments to two sites. This was later changed to one site. That agreement also contained a very restrictive limitation on the transfer of ABM systems and components; the SALT II agreement contains no such limits for offensive systems. The SALT I Interim Agreement provided for unequal aggregates of ICBM and SLBM launchers and unequal limits on ballistic-missile submarines, and some predicted at the time that these unequal limits would become a permanent feature of SALT. However, SALT II provides for equal aggregates between the United States and the Soviet Union and drops entirely the idea of numerical limits on submarines.

On the other hand, the two sides agreed to extend the SALT I freezes on building new ICBM silos and converting light ICBM launchers to heavy ICBM launchers. In the first case, we wanted the extension and, in the second case, the Soviets wanted it—which we accepted in return for Soviet concessions in other areas.

Moreover, both sides have made it clear in the negotiating record that the Protocol limits expire with the Protocol.

Luttwak: The Soviet system of government has a comparative advantage in allocating national resources to build up military power; the United States, being a creative, open society, has a *potential* advantage in science and technology for military innovation. The cruise missile (CM) is the current expression of this potential. Of low value on a unit basis, cruise missiles are of potentially very great value on a *force* basis. (A single cruise missile is worth much less than a single ballistic missile, but a billion dollars' worth of cruise missiles can provide a more powerful, and certainly more survivable, force than a billion dollars' worth of ballistic missiles.) The main advantage of the cruise missile is its small unit size and its potential for high accuracy. The first quality allows highly versatile deployments: CM's can be launched from many kinds of aircraft, from ships,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

submarines, or even from the back of ordinary trucks forward-deployed in Europe or the Far East. It was therefore a high Soviet priority in SALT to impose restrictions on the cruise-missile potential of the United States. The SALT II Protocol would now ban cruise-missile deployments of strategic value (by prohibiting sea-launched and land-based CM's with ranges in excess of 600 kilometers) except for air-launched CM's mounted on heavy bombers. As a result, only a fraction of the potential of CM technology will be realized if the SALT II agreement is ratified.

The goals of arms control are supposed to be, *first*, to insure strategic stability; *second*, to limit destruction in war; and *third*, to limit military expenditures. The central fact that SALT obscures is that CM technology offers *in itself* the means to achieve these goals:

First, since they are so small and so versatile in deployment, CM forces are inherently very stable indeed: not even the most optimistic counter-force planner could hope to target a diversified CM force distributed among ships, submarines, aircraft of various kinds, and small ground vehicles.

Second, CM's are highly accurate and therefore need only small (and less destructive) warheads; a force of 100 current CM's would cause less fallout than a single Soviet SS-18 ICBM.

Third, since CM's are inherently cheap, a shift to CM forces would reduce expenditures as compared to an equivalent force of ICBM's, bombers, or SLBM's.

Genuine arms control could thus have best been achieved by leaving CM's entirely unlimited, to provide an incentive for a shift into these stabilizing, less destructive, and cheaper weapons. But arms control and SALT II parted company long ago, and the outcome is not surprising.

The administration claims that the SALT II Protocol limits only the *deployment* of CM's and only until the end of 1981; it also claims that ground-launched and sea-launched CM's could not have been deployed within that time anyway. That result was of course contrived by manipulating the scheduling of the CM program: we *could* have had CM's by 1980, given the will to acquire them. The administration states above:

> In the course of the SALT II negotiations, it became clear that, in order to get an agreement that contained limits on certain Soviet strategic programs of interest to us, we would have to accept some limitations on cruise missiles.

One would like to know exactly what were those "limits on certain Soviet strategic programs" that the Russians accepted in exchange for the heavy restrictions on our CM technology. With no strategic sea-launched CM's in prospect, no submarine CM's, no ground-launched CM's, and air-launched CM's allowed only on "heavy bombers," it appears that in the end the only benefit which we will obtain from the entire CM technology will be to enhance the penetrability of roughly 120 of our old B-52's. That is certainly not what we expected when the B-1 was cancelled. At that time, the White House spoke of the cruise missile as the great new weapon which had made the B-1 unnecessary, and there was talk of thousands of cruise missiles, deployed in all convenient modes.

8. It is claimed that SALT II will be adequately verifiable; but how will the U.S. make sure that the Soviets aren't cheating? Doesn't the loss of intelligence-collection sites in Iran undermine our ability to verify the SALT II agreement?

Administration: The U.S. relies for verification on "national technical means" (NTM) which is a general term covering a variety of technical collection methods for monitoring Soviet military activities. As the President has publicly confirmed, these national technical means include photographic satellites. There are other collection methods as well. For example, we are able to monitor Soviet telemetry—that is, the technical data transmitted by radio signals from the Soviet missiles during tests—from outside Soviet territory. A further example of national technical means are the ships and aircraft which we also use to monitor Soviet missile tests. The sides have also acknowledged that large radars, such as the COBRA DANE radar at Shenya Island in the Aleutians, can be used as a form of national technical means.

This is not a complete list of the technical devices that constitute our NTM. Still less is it a complete list of U.S. intelligence resources. Many of our intelligence resources are very sensitive. Public acknowledgment of their existence, much less of their technical capabilities and details of how they work or what information they produce, would make it far easier for the Soviets to negate them. Therefore, what we can say publicly about the details of our intelligence facilities is very limited. Members of the Senate who will have to vote on the treaty will, of course, have full access to all the details.

However, there is no secret that our NTM enable us to learn a great deal about Soviet military systems, including the strategic-nuclear forces that are limited in SALT. We are able to monitor many aspects of the development, testing, production, deployment, training, and operation of Soviet strategic forces, despite the closed nature of Soviet society and Soviet concern with secrecy. A good measure of the capabilities of our systems of intelligence collection is the detailed information

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we publish on Soviet forces. For example, the Secretary of Defense's *Report for Fiscal Year 1980* lists the numbers of Soviet bombers and missiles, and gives estimates of the numbers of weapons carried on Soviet forces. We know that the Soviets have a "fifth generation" of ICBM's under development, and we know a good deal about their characteristics—this, before a single missile has been flight-tested. That this is by no means the full extent of our knowledge of Soviet systems is clear from the mass of unofficial—but often all-too-accurate—leaks of detailed information on Soviet programs.

From these sources, then, we are able to assemble a detailed picture of Soviet forces, both overall and in terms of the characteristics of particular systems. No one source is essential; instead we rely on information from a variety of sources—for example, what we learn from photography can be checked against information from radar or telemetry monitoring. This means that loss of a particular source, though it can be important and can require replacement, does not "blind" our ability to monitor what the Soviets are doing. Moreover, the use of multiple sources complicates any effort to disguise or conceal a violation. The Soviets know we have a big intelligence operation and know a certain amount about how it works, from our official statements, from leaks, from spies, and from their own NTM. But we know they do not know the full capabilities of our systems—or, equally important, how we use the information we collect. The result is that efforts to conceal would have to be planned to cope with a number of U.S. collection systems, some of them entirely unknown. (The need to maintain this uncertainty is a major justification for continued secrecy about our intelligence systems and methods.)

As for the loss of the intelligence-collection sites in Iran, we are proceeding in an orderly fashion to reestablish that capability. As Secretary of Defense Harold Brown pointed out in his April 5 speech in New York, the issue is not whether the capability will be reestablished but rather how, where, and how quickly. There are a number of alternatives available to us for recovering the capability. Some can be implemented more quickly than others. Some involve consultations with other countries, some do not.

Intelligence of the kind obtained from the Iranian sites provides information on Soviet strategic systems, including some of the aspects of the strategic systems which are limited by SALT. For this reason, we will be moving with all deliberate speed to reestablish the capability. However, as noted above, we have a large number of other technical intelligence-collection sources which collect intelligence on Soviet strategic systems. As a consequence, it is not imperative that the Iranian capability be immediately established to insure that the emerging SALT agreement is adequately verifiable, i.e., that any Soviet cheating that could pose a military risk be detected in time for the U.S. to respond and offset the threat. As long as the capability is reestablished on a timely basis—as we plan to do—there will be no impact on SALT verification. We estimate that regaining enough capability to monitor adequately these tests for SALT purposes will take about a year.

The principal information at issue is the nature and characteristics of new or modified Soviet ICBM's. Each such Soviet program will require about 20 flight tests over a period of years. We would be able to monitor testing and detect violations well before the testing programs were complete. On this basis, we are confident that we will be able to verify adequately a SALT agreement from the moment it is signed.

Luttwak: The fundamentals of verification are not in fact a matter of satellite technology, telemetry, and so on. The crucial facts of the matter are political. We have a virtually transparent society; the Russians are entirely secretive. We publish masses of hard data on our military forces; they publish only vague boasts. As a result, when we obtain a satellite photograph of a missile-like object on a Soviet test-range, all we know is just that. When the Russians get a similar photograph, they can immediately find out from published evidence whether it is an experiment or a prototype, if there is a production program and how large, what is its range and payload, what is the intended mission, and more.

This long-standing intelligence imbalance has become much worse of late. We have lost critical observation facilities in Iran, and some of our most important satellite systems have been fatally compromised. (The Russians now know exactly how the devices work; they therefore know how to fool them.) Beyond that, we have virtually eliminated the CIA's ability to collect intelligence overseas by covert means.

We can still identify and count large, fixed objects of classic form such as uncamouflaged ICBM silos. Beyond that, everything is a matter of relative uncertainty and claims to the contrary are either dishonest or ill-informed. Stansfield Turner, the director of Central Intelligence, did his honorable duty when he testified before Congress that the SALT II agreements could not be verified reliably at the present time, and that it would take five years to acquire the necessary capabilities. Others, much closer to the politics of the White House, more remote from the realities of the trade, and free of the special responsibilities of the director of Central Intelligence before the nation, have claimed that we could verify SALT II within one year. It is evident that Turner deserves our respect for his civic courage in telling the truth in the face of extreme political pressures.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

9. If this SALT agreement is so much in the national-security interests of the United States, why does the Soviet Union want it?

Administration: Before examining possible reasons for the Soviets' concluding that this agreement is in their national interest, it is important to note that there is nothing inconsistent in the agreement's being in the interests of both the United States and the Soviet Union. As in any agreement voluntarily signed by two independent parties, whether it be a business deal, a labor contract, or an international treaty, the incentive for signing and adhering to an agreement is that both parties find it beneficial, even though it is less than their maximum desires.

There are several possible reasons for the Soviet interest in this agreement. First of all, it should not be surprising that they, like us, believe that an unconstrained strategic-arms competition could increase the risk of nuclear war, while at the same time not enhance the security of either nation. This is not to imply that they view the U.S. as any less of a competitor—or that they would expect to lose such a race—but only that they realize that it is safer, and more in their interest from the viewpoint of national survival, if that competition is limited in the area of strategic weapons.

A second possible reason concerns the allocation of resources within the Soviet economy. While there is no question that they will spend on military systems whatever they think they need to, or could get an advantage from, it is well known that their economy is not in good shape. They have chronic problems with their agricultural production, technology lag, a shortage of skilled labor, a very cumbersome system of production and distribution, and the possibility of an energy shortage sometime in the next decade. With these problems, Soviet defense spending becomes a very great burden. The Soviet Union spends about 12 per cent of its gross national product on defense, while we spend only about 5 per cent.

Another reason for Soviet interest in SALT II may be that they see the equality in the SALT limits as confirming equal superpower status with the United States. The Soviets might well find it ironic that there are those in the U.S. who tend to regard them as 10 feet tall, since that is their general attitude toward us—particularly where technology is concerned. Even though the Soviets have had a larger overall number of strategic delivery vehicles than the U.S. for several years, they have lagged behind the U.S. in the most modern of strategic systems, MIRVed missiles, and could feel that they were viewed as second-best.

Finally it is clear that the current Soviet leadership has invested considerable personal prestige in the SALT negotiations. Thus, they probably want SALT to succeed so that their view of détente and the utility of cooperation with the West in some areas can be vindicated over the views of others in the Kremlin who may not be so enthusiastic about the SALT process.

Luttwak: Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union has a strategy. As a result, for Soviet planners arms control is a tool of policy instead of being a policy goal in itself. It is self-evident that the goal of Soviet strategy over the long term is to maximize the relative power of the Soviet Union.

In the past, the Soviet superiority in ground forces was diminished even within the sphere of land combat by the Western advantage in tactical air power; beyond that, any Soviet advantages in land strength (ground and air) were contained by the Western advantage in naval power. In the still broader frame of overall military strength, any Soviet advantage in conventional military forces would have been offset by the net advantage of the United States in strategic-military capability.

In the past, therefore, the Soviet Union was unable to use military force or the threat of force to impose its will upon other nations beyond the boundaries of the empire it had already conquered by 1945. Offsetting Western advantages checkmated every major Soviet military option.

Over the last two decades, the Soviet Union has worked with extreme tenacity to remove one by one the Western military counterweights to its strength. In tactical air power, a broad development effort has by now produced a Soviet tactical air force much larger than the American, and it has greatly narrowed the gap in quality. At sea, the Soviet Union now has a large oceanic navy that has definitely ended the period of U.S. naval supremacy.

The Soviet effort in building tactical air and naval forces has been impressive, but there is no doubt that the finest achievement of Soviet strategy has been the skillful combination of arms-control negotiations with a most energetic build-up program in the realm of long-range nuclear weapons. This combined policy now promises to eliminate the last of the counterweights—American nuclear deterrence of Soviet military pressures against NATO and other U.S. allies. By using SALT as a tool of policy (while the United States allowed the SALT process to usurp the proper place of strategy), the Russians have managed to stimulate American unilateralism (e.g., the B-1 cancellation, MX and cruise-missile delays) even while they themselves were building ICBM's, SLBM's, and bombers by the hundreds. Even better, they have been able to use SALT as a way of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

overcoming the most difficult of all the obstacles in their path, American technological creativity.

At first, the Russians were unhappy with discussions of *qualitative* limits in SALT, so long as negotiations focused on heavy ICBM's and such; but they soon realized that the Americans in their unstrategical innocence were willing to give up their only real card in the power competition across the board: technological innovation. This of course was the key to the implementation of Soviet strategy, since in the natural course of things they could never have hoped to defeat the creativity of American society.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Russians should greatly desire SALT II. As far as they are concerned, the treaty is a most important achievement, a critical element in a broader strategy designed to eliminate the one residual American military advantage, so that Soviet strength can at long last be brought to bear with full effect on the world situation. If SALT II fails to be ratified, if a great national debate ensues on the purposes and content of U.S. strategy, the Soviet Union would have a great deal to lose. A key ingredient in Soviet success to date has been the American enthusiasm for arms control for its own sake. This would not survive a clear-sighted reappraisal.

The administration's spokesmen like to explain Soviet enthusiasm for SALT as due to a putative desire to reallocate resources within the Soviet economy. It is true of course that the Soviet Union allocates 12 per cent of its gross national product to military outlays (as compared to 5 per cent for the U.S.). Nevertheless, the administration's theory reveals a touching innocence, or perhaps a fatal credulity: the Russians have *never* allowed civilian priorities to get in the way of their strategic goals. And if they did want to reallocate resources, why not simply slow down by a little the frenetic pace of their build-up? After all, even if they were to stop the SS-17 and SS-19 ICBM programs, they would still have two other healthy ICBM programs as against our single MX project (still in its research-and-development phase). Why pursue multiple SLBM efforts with such drastic urgency? The fact is that the Soviet Union is building in accordance with a strategy, and SALT II will in no serious way reduce Soviet efforts. If the precedent of SALT I is any guide, Soviet strategic expenditures will not go down by a single kopek.

10. Did the Soviets violate the SALT I agreements?

Administration: No. We have closely monitored Soviet strategic forces limited by SALT I for over six years. During this period on several occasions we have observed ambiguous situations or Soviet activities which were of concern to us. In each instance, we have promptly raised our concerns in the Standing Consultative Commission, a special body created in SALT I to deal with questions of implementation of the agreements, including questions which might arise concerning compliance and related situations which may be considered ambiguous. In each instance, the questionable activity ceased or additional information has clarified the situation and allayed our concern. In no instance did we find any grounds for charging the Soviets with a violation of the SALT I agreements.

The Soviets, for their part, have raised questions about U.S. activities which they considered of concern. These questions have also been satisfactorily resolved.

The record of exchanges by the parties on these issues has been provided to the Congress by Secretary of State Vance in February 1978. This report is available to the public (Department of State Publication 8930).

The record of the SALT I agreements demonstrates both the ability and willingness of the U.S. to object to questionable practices and the commitment of both sides to insuring the viability of the SALT agreements by using effective procedures for resolving compliance questions when they arise.

Luttwak: The administration's answer is a flat no. That is a true, but grossly incomplete, answer. It *is* true that the Soviet Union did not violate the strict letter of the SALT I agreed texts. But the Soviet Union made nonsense of the whole meaning and purpose of the SALT I agreements by exploiting every significant loophole and by violating the entire spirit of the accords.

Actually, in a way, it is the United States that has violated its own undertakings: the loopholes in the agreement were obvious enough, and were clearly pointed out at the time in the open literature.* We were told, however, that there was nothing to worry about, since a series of "unilateral statements" issued by the United States had fully covered all the loopholes. We were told that the U.S. would terminate the agreements if these restraints were ignored by the Soviet Union.

In reality, since 1972 the Soviet Union has ig-

* See Edward N. Luttwak, *The Strategic Balance*, CSIS Washington Paper No. 3, 1972.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nored the unilateral statements while the United States has failed to enforce them by appropriate remedies. For example, the whole rationale for the American acceptance of the unequal limits on ICBM's in the 1972 SALT accords (1,608 for the USSR versus 1,054 for the U.S.) was that the Soviet Union would limit the overall throw-weight of its ICBM's by not building any more "heavy" ICBM (SS-9/SS-18) silos—otherwise, we were told, the U.S. Minuteman ICBM's would be endangered. To obtain the 308-unit limit on "heavy" ICBM silos in SALT I, the United States agreed to the higher overall ceiling for Soviet ICBM's of all types. Obviously the presumption was that those ICBM silos which were *not* for "heavy" missiles would be used for "light" ICBM's. As we now know, the Soviet Union was even then building SS-19 ICBM's, which are not "light" by any imaginable definition: their throw-weight is more than *three times* as great as that of the "light" SS-11's or Minuteman III's. Each SS-19 carries up to six large warheads of half-a-megaton yield (as against three 0.17 megaton warheads for the Minuteman III); two SS-19's are therefore more of a threat to U.S. ICBM silos than one SS-18 would have been. In 1972 it was commonly understood that the Soviet Union would not be allowed to replace "light" ICBM's with heavy ones. By replacing SS-11's (no threat to Minuteman) with SS-19's, the Soviet Union has in effect done just that.

More generally, the Soviet Union has violated the whole purpose of the SALT I accords. An arms-control agreement is supposed to control arms, but since 1972 we have witnessed the deployment of no fewer than four new Soviet ICBM types (SS-16, SS-17, SS-18, SS-19), three types of SLBM submarines, two new SLBM's (SS-N-17 and SS-N-18), and the Backfire bomber. All but one of these weapons (the SS-16) have been produced in generous quantities. Had the Soviet Union shared a genuine interest in arms control, it would surely have taken care to exercise at least a modicum of restraint. Why not have, say, only *two* ICBM types to match each American project instead of four? Why all the urgency and costly multiplicity of types?

There is no reason to believe that SALT II will serve the interests of the United States, *or* the disinterested purposes of arms control, any better than the SALT I accords did.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Myths about Minorities

Thomas Sowell

WILL ROGERS once said that it's not ignorance that is so bad, but all the things we know "that ain't so." Much of what we "know" about racial and ethnic minorities in America is unsubstantiated and just plain wrong.

We "know," for example, that there is in this country a majority of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (Wasps) surrounded by a fringe of minorities, who have lower incomes, occupations, and IQ's, and higher fertility rates and crime rates. We "know" that non-whites invariably earn less than whites, and that blacks, who suffer broken homes as a legacy of slavery, are the worst off of all in economic terms. Yet *none* of those common beliefs is literally true, and some are very wide of the mark.

"Minorities"

THE very notion of a Wasp majority and small minorities is wrong. Census Bureau surveys show that about half of the American population cannot identify their ethnicity at all, presumably because of intermixtures over the generations. While Anglo-Saxons are the largest single identifiable group, they are only 14 per cent of the population —not much more than such "minorities" as German-Americans (13 per cent) or blacks (11 per cent). There is thus no ethnic majority to be contrasted with minorities, but a mosaic of many groups, and a large number of people who are mixtures of various groups.

Even the racial distinction between black and white is not as sharp in reality as it is in rhetoric. Very few blacks are of unmixed African ancestry. Most have at least one white ancestor, and in addition, whole tribes of Indians have been absorbed into the black population. By the same token, a leading social historian has estimated that tens of millions of white Americans have at least one black ancestor. The old Southern racial doctrine —that "one drop of Negro blood" made you black, legally and socially—was never carried out in practice; to avoid embarrassing some of the "best" white Southern families, state laws required some specified fraction of Negro ancestry.

Americans are far from having blended into one indistinguishable mass, but we are just as far from being a majority-minority society, or a society in which racial and ethnic labels can be taken literally. Paradoxically, the melting-pot concept enjoyed its greatest popularity at a time when intermarriage was still rare across religious or ethnic lines, and rarer yet across racial lines. It is now dismissed by intellectuals at a time when it is closer to reality than ever before. Thus, most marriages of American men of Irish ancestry are to women who are not of Irish ancestry. Most men of German or Polish ancestry do not marry within their respective ethnic groups. Nor is this trend limited to whites. About 40 per cent of Japanese-American men marry women who are not Japanese-American. In short, both the acceptance and the rejection of the "melting-pot" concept by intellectuals was a matter of changing fashions rather than hard evidence.

Incomes and Occupations

ANGLO-SAXONS are not pace setters in income, occupations, or education. Americans of Jewish, Japanese, Polish, Chinese, or Italian ancestry make more money. While the image of the Wasp is one of old families in elite enclaves, the reality also includes desperately poor people scattered along hundreds of miles of the Appalachians, and others scattered throughout the whole range of American incomes and occupations.

The idea of a "national average" is as misleading as the idea of a Wasp majority. Most people are not average. Variations in income from one group to another are common, and income variations among age brackets, or among cities, are even larger than income variations among ethnic groups. The national average is nothing more than a statistical amalgamation of all these wide-ranging diversities. The idea that it is a norm or a standard—that any statistical deviation from it is both unusual and suspicious, and that we would all be the same except for the sins of "society"—is arbitrary political rhetoric.

THOMAS SOWELL is professor of economics at the University of California at Los Angeles. His most recent book is *Essays and Data on American Ethnic Groups*, published by the Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The incomes of so-called ethnic minorities do not line up below the mythical national norm but range on both sides of the statistical average. For example, the following American ethnic groups earned the following percentages of the national average in family income, at the time of the most recent census:

Ethnicity	Income
Jewish	170 per cent
Japanese	132 per cent
Polish	115 per cent
Italian	112 per cent
Chinese	112 per cent
German	107 per cent
Anglo-Saxon	107 per cent
Irish	103 per cent
National Average	100 per cent
Filipino	99 per cent
West Indian	94 per cent
Mexican	76 per cent
Puerto Rican	63 per cent
Black	62 per cent
Indian	60 per cent

(Source: *Essays and Data on American Ethnic Groups*, Urban Institute, 1978.)

These income patterns show more of a continuum than a majority-minority dichotomy. Moreover, two of the five highest income groups—Chinese and Japanese—are non-white. The great majority of Puerto Ricans are white, but their incomes are only about half the incomes of these two Oriental groups, and virtually the same as the incomes of blacks. West Indians are black, but their incomes differ little from the national average. The supposedly overwhelming effect of color on economic well-being is less apparent in census data than it is in media rhetoric.

Black West Indians are sometimes said to be treated preferentially by employers, who pick them out from other blacks by their accent, or by their place of birth or schooling. But if this were the reason why West Indians earn far higher incomes than other blacks, it would apply much less to second-generation West Indians who have less of an accent (or no accent) and are born and educated in the United States. This whole line of reasoning collapses like a house of cards under the weight of census data for second-generation West Indians—who have higher incomes than Anglo-Saxons, and higher representation in professional occupations.

The facts about occupation are just as far from popular (or media) beliefs as the facts about income. About 14 per cent of employed Americans are in the professions, or in comparable technical and similar fields. Despite the reiterated theme of color barriers or exclusions in the professions, at least four non-white groups have higher than average representation in these high-level occupations: black West Indians (15 per cent); Japanese (18 per cent); Filipinos (23 per cent); and Chinese (25 per cent). Black Americans have below-average representation (8 per cent), but white Puerto Ricans have even lower representation (5 per cent). There are many reasons why various groups have differing representations in the professions, but the supposedly decisive effect of color as depicted by the media is, again, simply not reflected in the census data.

Somewhere down the road, we will have to come to grips with the hard fact that color is not as all-determining as we once thought—or as civil-rights activists still insist—and that cultural factors will have to be dealt with much more seriously.

Social Pathology

The problems that minorities have are so much a cliché that ethnic groups without special problems are often not even regarded as minorities. Some of the most commonly cited problems are broken homes, poor educational performances, high crime rates, and very large families. This preoccupation with pathology—and with the responsibility of "society" for supposedly causing it—often overlooks strengths and successes within the self-same ethnic groups. Those who have written about the economic advancement of blacks (such as Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard Scammon) have found themselves the targets of abuse. So have those (like myself) who have written about high-performance black schools.

One might think there would be great interest in what does and does not work, especially in an area where so much fails. But the hostile reception accorded to any good news about black progress suggests a large vested interest in social pathology—as a source of accusations and demands on society, and as a reason for giving money, power, and patronage to the accusers and denouncers. Although much social pathology is all too real, the question is what is its source, and what will make things better or worse. The politically preferred explanation may be the sins of others, but it is not enough just to document the existence of such sins. Nothing is easier to prove than sin among human beings. The real issue remains this: do the economic and other problems of ethnic groups actually vary with the frequency or severity of the sins against them?

Groups may be subject to very similar treatment by society at large and yet differ enormously in their economic achievements and social problems. Japanese-Americans and Mexican-Americans, for example, came to the United States in large numbers at about the same time (the early 1900's), set-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tled in the same region (the Southwest), and faced discrimination in schools and on the job. Yet today Japanese-American incomes are almost double the incomes of Mexican-Americans, and their crime rates and broken homes are only a fraction of the figures for Mexican-Americans. As for how they were treated by "society," the Japanese suffered more—being legally denied citizenship and land ownership for many years, and being interned with great loss of property during World War II. They were also much easier targets of racism, being physically different, whereas many Mexican-Americans are physically indistinguishable from other white people. (The Japanese language is also further from English than the Spanish language is.)

Why one group does better economically than another is a complex question. But the presence of Jews and Japanese at the top of the income ladder among American ethnic groups is strong evidence that prejudice or discrimination alone is hardly a sufficient explanation.

If there is one thing that separates the high-income groups from the low-income groups, far more decisively than color or discrimination, it is family patterns. More than half of all Mexican-American children are in families of six or more children. Half of all Japanese-American children are in families of three or fewer. A relatively prosperous black group like the West Indians has fewer children per family than a relatively poor white group like the Puerto Ricans. Where there is only a mother, but no father, to take care of a large family, the problems are obviously even greater.

Those who look for sins are quick to call broken homes and female-headed families among blacks a "legacy from slavery." In reality, however, this is a relatively recent phenomenon—and one equally common among Puerto Ricans, who were not enslaved. (It was also common earlier in the century among the Irish, when they lived under conditions similar to those of blacks and Puerto Ricans today.) Historically, the great bulk of black children grew up in male-headed, two-parent households, under both slavery and freedom, well into the early decades of the 20th century. The current large and rising numbers of female-headed families among blacks is a modern phenomenon stemming from the era of the welfare state—when the government began to subsidize desertion and teenage pregnancy.

An even more emotion-laden issue is the racial difference in IQ test scores. People on both sides of the controversy proceed as if there must be something unique about blacks—either a unique genetic makeup or a unique environment. This is another example of the danger of comparing statistics from a single isolated group with the national average—even when those statistics form a continuum, with other groups close by on either side. Historically, IQ scores in the 80's have been commonplace among American ethnic groups—including some groups now scoring at or above the national average, such as Italian-Americans or Polish-Americans. Such IQ's have also been commonplace abroad, as among Catholics in Northern Ireland, canal-boat children in Britain, indigenous Israelis of non-European stock, or other groups living outside the mainstream of Western culture. Moreover, IQ scores are not fixed, but fluctuate even from one decade to the next, as in the following results from a large, nationwide study:

Ethnicity	IQ	
	1970's	1960's
Polish	109	107
Chinese	108	107
German	105	106
Irish	105	107
Italian	100	103
Mexican	87	82
Black	82	88
Puerto Rican	80	84

(Source: *Essays and Data on American Ethnic Groups*, Urban Institute, 1978.)

High crime rates among blacks are likewise regarded as unique, and often glibly attributed to such "root causes" as racism and discrimination. Historically, however, there is nothing unique to blacks about crime and violence. Police vans are still called "Paddy wagons" today because they were so often full of Irishmen in 19th-century America. The Irish killed more people in one riot in New York in 1863 than blacks killed in all the ghetto riots across the country in the 1960's. Nor were the Irish themselves unique. In fact, they were often the *victims* of riots, as other groups invaded their neighborhoods to commit violence, arson, or murder. Nineteenth-century "race riots" were much bloodier than their present-day counterparts, even though the "races" involved were usually all white.

As for "white racism" as the root cause of black crime, it has produced no such effect on other non-whites, such as West Indians or Japanese-Americans. Studies have shown both groups to have lower crime rates than whites. This is not to deny that crime in general, and high crime rates among blacks in particular, are serious problems. They are, indeed, much too serious to be dealt with through easy assumptions and ideology.

Ignored Variables

If ideological predispositions tend to lead people toward giving explanations without evidence, they also tend to make people ignore factors that preclude an assessment of blame, or quick political solutions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus, one of the most obvious reasons for differences in income among ethnic groups is routinely overlooked: some groups work more than others. About one-fifth of Chinese-American families have three or more people working. Among Puerto Ricans the proportion is less than half that. When it comes to families with no one working, it is the Puerto Ricans who are first and the Chinese who are last. Most ethnic groups fall somewhere betweern these extremes, with the four lowest income groups having the fewest people per family working regularly.

Experience is another obvious factor in income differences—and one that is just as routinely ignored. This is a country where income differences among age brackets are even greater than income differences among races and ethnic groups. For this reason, differences in age (experience) among ethnic groups will obviously affect income. These age differences are vast: the four lowest income groups are all at least a decade younger than the four highest, and at least two decades younger than the top group, the Jews.

Ethnicity	Age
Jewish	46
Polish	40
Irish	37
German	36
Italian	36
Anglo-Saxon	34
Japanese	32
Total U.S.	28
Chinese	27
Black	22
American Indian	20
Mexican	18
Puerto Rican	18

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.)

Age differences of this magnitude turn gross comparisons among ethnic groups into comparisons of apples and oranges.

Educational differences compound the effect of age differences. Jews, in addition to being more than a quarter of a century older than Puerto Ricans, average 70 per cent more education. In the face of compounded differences of this magnitude, high-level occupations which typically require *both* experience and education cannot be filled on the basis of proportional representation from the various ethnic groups. Yet the government's affirmative-action policies constantly compare job percentages with population percentages—ignoring the fact that population statistics include not only the inexperienced and less educated, but also children and infants.

Something as apparently innocuous as location has a great impact on income. Regional differences in incomes are very substantial, especially as between the South and other regions. The average difference in income between California and Arkansas is greater than that between blacks and whites. Between Alaska and Mississippi, the income difference is greater still. The apparent paradox that Puerto Ricans earn a shade more than blacks nationally, while at any given location blacks tend to earn more than Puerto Ricans, is easily explained by the fact that half the black population of the United States is located in the low-income South. Even the more substantial income advantage of Mexican-Americans over blacks disappears if one considers only blacks outside the South. In Los Angeles, the two groups' incomes are virtually identical.

Virtually every American ethnic group has its own peculiar pattern of geographical distribution, reflecting historical happenstance and cultural preference. Each group's average national income reflects regional variations which may have nothing to do with ethnicity. Even an ideal society, with zero discrimination, would not produce equal incomes for its various ethnic groups as long as they were distributed geographically in different ways —this, quite apart from all the other huge differences in age, education, and other factors.

One of the more intangible—but very important —differences among groups has to do with culture, tradition, values, and work skills. Many of these differences go back to the time before the various groups ever set foot on American soil. The overrepresentation of Jews in the garment industry in America reflects a previous overrepresentation in clothing production in Eastern Europe. The overrepresentation of Germans in the American beer industry, or of Irish in politics, likewise has historical roots in their respective countries of origin.

Not only skills but attitudes were brought over from Europe or other places of origin. The Irish in Boston at the turn of the century had more education than Jews in the same city at that same time, but more Jewish children than Irish children went on to college. American society had given the Irish (who arrived earlier) more education than it had the Jews, but centuries of tradition in Europe had produced very different attitudes toward education in the two groups. "Society" in the United States is not the cause of all American social phenomena.

Some Implications

Nothing is easier to find in American history than ethnic or racial discrimination—in jobs, schooling, housing, and many other basic areas of life. It is tempting to find here the explanation of all intergroup differences. But the presence of other large differences—in age, geographical distribution, and cultural orientation—means that dis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crimination cannot automatically be presumed to be the only factor, or necessarily even the major factor.

How far have we come in reducing or eliminating discriminatory pay differences among individuals with the same qualifications and different racial or ethnic backgrounds? Among the younger generation, we have come just about all the way. By the late 1960's, young blacks and whites from families with similar reading (or non-reading) habits, and with the same individual levels of education, *had the same income.* This was a milestone in the fight against discrimination, but the fact that large racial and ethnic differences in income still remain indicates that the fight against discrimination is only one of many battles that need to be fought. Reading habits, for example, vary significantly among ethnic groups, as do family size, the number of one-parent households, and many other characteristics that affect the opportunity for young people to enter the economy with equal qualifications. That many of today's racial or ethnic handicaps existed before young people ever reached the employer's door is no consolation, but only an indication of where needed efforts might be directed.

Unfortunately, many of these environmental factors are much more difficult to deal with than employer discrimination. Civil-rights organizations with years of specialization in fighting employer discrimination cannot change direction overnight, or take on a whole new range of social problems that no one knows how to cope with very effectively. Such a drastic reorientation is hardly feasible. What *is* possible is for thinking people, and especially decision-makers, to require hard evidence before advocating public policies based on time-worn clichés, especially when they are held by organizations or self-styled spokesmen doing business-as-usual.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Watergate: Toward a Revisionist View

James A. Nuechterlein

FEW of us by now can muster the will to wallow any further in Watergate. However we feel about Richard Nixon and the series of events that brought him down, we want above all to be done with both of them. Watergate has so overwhelmed contemporary political consciousness that we feel at once saturated with the lessons of the scandal and yet unsure precisely what they might mean for us. Our conceptual faculties benumbed under the continuing avalanche of Watergate literature—memoirs, recountings, analyses, and sermonizings—we feel it difficult to sort out what the event's significance finally consists in. In any case, we prefer to hear no more about it all just now.

Yet there are reasons for resisting the mood of stupefied exhaustion. There is still learning to be done from Watergate, and it may be, in fact, that we are only now getting far enough removed from the details of the scandal to begin to take proper measure of its meaning. Only as we begin to distance ourselves from the event can we get past the stage of conditioned response and automatic judgment in our reaction to accounts of it. Two recent memoirs by participants in the crisis—John J. Sirica* and Maurice H. Stans†—help us ponder aspects and nuances of Watergate that might previously have registered only partially or perhaps even not at all.

II

BEFORE new lessons concerning Watergate can be absorbed, however, a number of old ones will first have to be unlearned. It is probably inevitable that any major event will occasion a good deal of earnest nonsense. Watergate certainly has.

There is, in the first instance, the matter of significance. Historians and political analysts have a natural inclination to assume that significant events must have significant meanings. Watergate suggests that this is not necessarily so. There was not more there than met the eye. The scandal had momentous political effects, but its circumstances were essentially banal, and it left little in the way of usable lessons or enduring implications. Watergate may by now be the most overinterpreted event of modern times; it simply will not bear the weight of the portentous meanings that have been attached to it. We have learned from it again the venerable lessons that politics should not be conducted as warfare and that we need to elect to high office those who understand that there are certain things that decent men simply do not do. Those are useful reminders, but they require us neither to reconstruct our political system nor to reorder our moral values.

It is perhaps most useful to view Watergate as constituting, in symbolic terms, the last act of the 60's. The scheme issued from an administration enveloped in a state-of-siege mentality, and that mentality grew out of the fevered and polarized political climate of the decade following the assassination of John F. Kennedy. By the end of Nixon's first term, the President and his advisers had become the victims of their ideological preconceptions. Convinced that the message of their accomplishments was being distorted or ignored by hostile media and agitated by left-wing approval of and even participation in leaks of national-security information—some important, some not—they conjured up from within their White House fortress a nightmare vision of a nation deceived and endangered by a radical minority. And they proceeded to act on the basis of that vision.

When politics is war, it is necessary, as in all combat situations, to gather intelligence on the enemy's strategy and tactics. There has never been any good evidence that Nixon knew in advance about the Watergate break-in, and there is probably no reason to doubt his continuing denials. But neither is there any reason to suppose that he would have objected if he had known, except possibly on grounds of prudence.

The cover-up—in which of course Nixon was involved, and virtually from the beginning—followed naturally from the failure of the break-in. There was no plot as such, simply the instinctive behavior of men caught in an incredible blunder, trying to extricate themselves in any way they

JAMES A. NUECHTERLEIN is an American who teaches history at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

* *To Set the Record Straight: The Break-in, the Tapes, the Conspirators, the Pardon*, Norton, 394 pp., $15.00.

† *The Terrors of Justice: The Untold Side of Watergate*, Everest House, 478 pp., $10.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could. The immediate and automatic decision to deny any higher authorization for the burglary led inexorably, one step after another, to the making of a quagmire. Nixon's own summary observation is self-serving but not inaccurate: "We . . . all simply wandered into a situation unthinkingly, trying to protect ourselves from what we saw as a political problem."* The cover-up was sordid and inexcusable, but it was not—as it has been variously depicted—an inevitable product of the imperial Presidency, a function of some peculiarly American preoccupation with ambition, success, and power, or a grand conspiracy against constitutional government.

Much of the initial interpretative gas over Watergate is already dissipating. President Carter's inability to get much of anything at all that he wants from Congress, for example, makes it painfully obvious that we are in no present danger of a runaway Presidency. Carter's particular problems aside, it has been clear to most observers for a very long time that our constitutional arrangements are such that national leadership must come from the President. The Congress is simply not constructed to provide coherent direction to the nation in either foreign or domestic affairs. (A fascinating and relevant statistic: there are now, by recent count, 152 subcommittee chairmen among the members of the House of Representatives.) The Nixon White House undoubtedly misused its powers, but the primary lesson of Watergate remains that we need a vigilant public and honorable leaders, not a reshuffling of the constitutional division of powers.

If the imperial Presidency has lost currency as a Watergate theme, the idea of the scandal as a commentary on the decline of American morality seems still to have lingering attractions. From the very beginning, our public moralists seized on Watergate as a symbol of the nation's predilection for whoring after false gods. The first of the Watergate conspirators to break into print, Jeb Magruder, deputy director to John Mitchell on the Committee to Reelect the President (CRP), informed us in the title of his memoir that his had been *An American Life*,† and he went on to wonder whether the Watergate crimes did not "somehow reflect larger failures in the values" of American society: "I think that I and many members of my generation placed far too much emphasis on our personal ambitions, on achieving success, as measured in materialistic terms, and far too little emphasis on moral and humanistic values." The Reverend William Sloane Coffin, Jr., summarized Magruder's involvement with Watergate as "an all-American experience." There was, we were meant to see, significance here.

Perhaps. Recognition of human frailty is always salutary in a society still resistant to notions of original sin. More particularly, it is difficult not to be appalled by the narcissistic preoccupation of a John Dean with vulgar success, particularly in his measuring of it: fast sports cars, lots of women, impressive office furnishings.** (Dean, of course, like all the other born-again ex-Watergaters, assures us that "everything is different now.")

Nonetheless, we might well hesitate to blame Watergate on the traditional demons of personal ambition and desire for success. The old bitch goddess gets blamed for so much in general that one begins to wonder if she is responsible for anything in particular. We can safely assume that most major political figures in America—or anywhere else—are overachievers greatly attracted to power and success. Few such men, however, are normally implicated, at least to our knowledge, in criminal conspiracies. The men at the heart of the Watergate crimes—Nixon, Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman—obviously wore ethical blinders, but the fundamental problem lay with their public political values, not their private moral ones. They had already achieved success and power, and neither materialism nor personal ambition had anything significant to do with their deliberations over Watergate.

WHICH brings us to the third of the conventional interpretations of Watergate: how close we all came to the loss of our constitutional liberties. There is, of course, considerable evidence that the Nixon administration frequently did step over the line of legitimate behavior: excessive wiretaps; the extra-legal plumbers unit; the Huston intelligence plan; the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist; attempts to manipulate the CIA and FBI; Watergate itself. Charles Colson at the height of his influence appears to have been a genuinely sinister figure, and too many other men in the Nixon White House, trembling under Haldeman's ultimate and recurring threat, "If you can't get the job done, we'll find someone who can," acted in ways that violated private and public decency. Moreover, the hardball politics was initiated and encouraged at the very top.

But this quite real problem of abuse of executive power has frequently been inflated out of reasonable proportion. One does not in any way have to accept Nixon's various *tu quoque* defenses as exculpation for his crimes to concede that in fact it did not all start with Watergate. It is an exaggeration to argue, as some have done, that the kind of constitutional improprieties Nixon indulged in had constituted standard operating procedure for most administrations since Franklin D. Roosevelt, but it cannot be denied that he was, in a number of areas, armed with considerable precedent. Nixon was chief of presidential sinners, but he was neither the first nor the only one. We

* *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, Grosset & Dunlap, 1120 pp., $19.95.

† Atheneum, 338 pp., $10.00.

** *Blind Ambition*, Simon & Schuster, 415 pp., $9.75.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have the Nixon tapes; it is probably just as well, from what we already know, that we don't have the Roosevelt, Kennedy, or Johnson ones.

Nor should it be forgotten that, as already noted, Nixon acted in part out of a genuine, if exaggerated, concern for national security. He cynically and egregiously invoked national-security concerns in the Watergate cover-up, where, of course, they were entirely irrelevant, but that was not always the case. Henry Kissinger and Nixon alike had become legitimately concerned over the effect of leaks of confidential information on the conduct of American foreign policy. Nixon's may have been the paranoid style, but, as the saying goes, paranoids do have enemies.

It is virtually impossible to raise these points without seeming to excuse or at least minimize Watergate. Yet it is worth taking that risk if only in an attempt to counter the still widespread assumption that the Nixon administration came close to undermining the American constitutional system. That assumption found its classic expression a few years back in the widely popular television mini-series, *Washington: Behind Closed Doors*, in which the Nixonesque President, along with all his other sins, contemplates the suspension of national elections. That particular piece of hysteria had originally arisen among the more febrile elements of the radical Left during Nixon's first term, and yet here it appeared again, only now blithely mingled in with all the things Nixon *had* done (or had ever been suspected of doing) in a program watched, and considered as truth, by millions of Americans. And the Nixon of that series, who is the Nixon large numbers of people have been led to believe is the genuine article, *could* have suspended national elections. What Nixon did was bad enough that we do not need to attribute to him intentions he never had, and Watergate by itself was bad enough—stupid, criminal, and inexcusable enough—that we do not need to make of it more than it was.

III

IF MANY of the received lessons of Watergate appear on examination to be trivial, exaggerated, or even downright misleading, there are other aspects of the affair that deserve closer attention than they have so far attracted. The recent memoirs by Sirica and Stans help us to consider these less obvious lessons of the scandal, though not entirely in the ways that the authors intended.

When Maurice H. Stans summarizes his Watergate experience as *The Terrors of Justice*, we immediately suspect hyperbole, if not dissimulation. Yet looked at dispassionately—at least so far as the official record can establish it—his is a genuinely harrowing tale. Ponderously detailed, awkwardly written and organized, this book nonetheless largely persuades, so long, that is, as it sticks to the details of the author's experiences.

Prior to Watergate, Stans had one of those Horatio Alger careers so common in the catalogues of American experience that we forget how significant and impressive they are. Born to children of immigrants in very modest circumstances in Shakopee, Minnesota, in 1908, Stans rose, through ambition, talent, and hard work, to the very top of the accounting profession before entering public life. Having served in the Eisenhower administration, he developed a strong case of Potomac fever (his term) and decided by the mid-60's to attach himself to Richard Nixon's star as his most likely route back to Washington. His special talent was that of fund-raiser, and he took on that role for Nixon, first in the 1962 race for the governorship of California, and later and more enthusiastically in the 1968 campaign for presidential nomination and election. As with everything else that he took on in his career, Stans was good at his job (Dean has said that he was the only member of the administration "who could have tutored Bob Haldeman on efficiency") and Nixon rewarded him with the position of Secretary of Commerce. Indeed, Stans had been too good at his job, and when it came time for the bid for election to a second term, Nixon put such heavy pressure on him that Stans, against his own real wishes, resigned his cabinet position in early 1972 to become finance chairman of CRP.

There, of course, disaster struck. Since he was the man in charge of the money, it seemed obvious to investigators—and to the media—that Stans must have known something about the uses of the funds that were raised first to finance the Watergate break-in and later to aid in the cover-up. Yet the record seems clear that he did not. Stans insisted from the outset on a clear separation of duties within CRP between the finance and campaign committees: his committee would raise and disburse the funds, but it was not its job to judge or verify the uses to which the campaign committee felt the monies should be put. If expenditures were properly authorized by a member of the campaign committee, the finance committee would meet them. And within the finance operation, Stans put his own energies to raising money; he left it to the treasurer of his committee, Hugh Sloan, Jr., to pay it out.

Thus the money for Watergate was paid out by Sloan to G. Gordon Liddy on the authorization of Magruder, Mitchell's deputy director. Liddy was so secretive concerning the money's purposes that Sloan complained to Stans; Stans checked with Mitchell, who assured him, without going into detail, that the payment was legitimate; and Stans told Sloan to pay the money. Stans's only involvement with the cover-up was a payment of $75,000 on June 29, 1972 to Herbert Kalmbach for purposes that Kalmbach assured Stans were legitimate, but which turned out to be part of the payoffs to insure the silence of the Watergate burglars. On none of this are we required to accept Stans's word. The Watergate prosecutors never

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

charged Stans with involvement in any aspect of Watergate, and none of the conspirators has ever suggested that he was part of their operations. We might wonder in a few instances why he did not raise more questions than he apparently did (it would seem naive to suppose that he did not harbor certain suspicions), but we have no good reason to doubt his absolute denial of criminal knowledge or action.

EVEN as the actual record began to emerge, however, the media continued to tell the story of Watergate as if Stans had somehow been at the center of things. Although he was never officially charged with involvement, there is still because of that coverage a widespread public assumption that Stans was in some vague manner part of the Watergate scandal.

That assumption blends into the wider and near universal belief that the entire Nixon fund-raising operation in 1972 was one great sinkhole of corruption. The range of corrupt practices charged against the operation Stans headed has been astonishingly broad: that the Nixon campaign received enormous illegal gifts from foreign sources, such as the Shah of Iran; that CRP fund-raisers, armed with lists of corporations in trouble with government agencies, went about exchanging promises of help for large contributions; that government contracts were promised in exchange for generous gifts to the campaign; that government jobs, especially ambassadorships, were in effect sold to the highest bidders (one potential contributor, assuming that was in fact the way things operated, bluntly asked Stans, "How much for Luxembourg?"; Stans tells us he informed the man that Luxembourg was not for sale); that CRP urged contributors to pay in cash in order that *quid pro quo* dealings and other corrupt operations would be harder to trace; that a massive "laundering" operation was carried on by the committee to hide the sources of contributions; that an "enemy list" of those who had refused to contribute was kept for later retaliatory action by the administration.

All of these charges, Stans tells us, came under exhaustive scrutiny and investigation by the office of the Watergate special prosecutor. None of them, he insists, resulted in the laying of any criminal charges, much less the securing of any convictions:

> Insofar as the Nixon money-raising in 1972 was concerned, there were only a handful of non-willful technical violations, and these were less significant individually and in the aggregate than similar oversights and violations by a number of other candidates who were not prosecuted.
>
> That was the surviving sum and substance of all of the alleged financial corruption in the 1972 Nixon campaign. Not a single proven case of corrupt action. No favors granted. No contracts awarded. No cases fixed. No ambassadorships sold. No illegal contributions from foreigners. No overseas laundries. No illegal solicitations. No list of companies in trouble with the government. No enemy lists. No fund-raising by government officials. No extortion or coercion. No intentional circumvention of the law in a single instance. That is precisely what the Department of Justice, the Special Prosecutor, and the courts found.

Stans seems justified in describing the five counts on which he was finally convicted—and fined $1,000 per count—as "technical violations." There were two charges of *non-willful* receipt of illegal corporate contributions and three charges of late reporting of contributions and payments. None of them, as described in detail by Stans, appears to have involved anything more than a minor and insignificant infraction of election-financing laws, and it seems clear that the violations would, under ordinary circumstances, simply have been ignored. Stans reluctantly pleaded guilty to these misdemeanors in 1975, he says, rather than face a protracted, expensive, and debilitating trial in a District of Columbia court which he feared would still be operating in an inflamed climate of opinion. One senses that a part of him now deeply regrets that decision.

Stans's reluctance to face a trial is easily understandable in the circumstances. He had already endured a trial in New York in 1974 in which he and Mitchell faced charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and perjury in connection with receipt of a $200,000 campaign contribution in 1972 from financier Robert Vesco, supposedly in exchange for helping Vesco with an investigation of his activities by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The jury, faced with what Tom Wicker of the New York *Times* described as "clearly a weak case" for the prosecution, acquitted the defendants on all counts.

Stans cherishes that acquittal, but, as already noted, he knows that millions of Americans will remain forever persuaded that, if only in some indefinable way, he was nonetheless "mixed up in Watergate." That is his anguish, and it is impossible upon reading this memoir not in some measure to share it with him. It could be, of course, that he has not told us the full truth, that there are elements, of moral guilt especially, which he has not fully confronted. That, I must add, is not my reading of the book, and in any case—moral guilt or not—Stans does seem fully to have established that he was legally innocent of any significant wrongdoing in the variety of matters that have been gathered under the Watergate umbrella, and that he nonetheless became subject to an extraordinary and vicious campaign of smear and slander.

Stans lays out his case in excruciating and repetitive detail; he specifies what seem to him scores of instances of unfair treatment at the hands of investigators, prosecutors, district attorneys, politicians, public-interest groups, publishers, reporters,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and editorialists. The massive misreporting of his situation by the media—some of it malicious, much of it simply ignorant and unprofessional—gets the most careful and, by any standard, devastating attention. Yet for all his sense of grievance and outrage, Stans maintains a restrained and dignified tone. Given all that he endured, he appears surprisingly free of bitterness and desire for vengeance. Moved at times to the edge of despair, he managed throughout his ordeal to hold on to his equanimity, largely through massive doses of old-fashioned American positive thinking. (During the Vesco trial, for example, Stans and his wife attended a variety of church services, "choosing among those listed in the Saturday papers the sermons with the most reassuring titles." By this process, the Stanses found themselves in frequent attendance at the Marble Collegiate Church listening to Dr. Norman Vincent Peale.)

STANS desires the exoneration of history, the reclaiming, as he told the Senate Watergate Committee, of "my good name." But that is not the limit of his intentions. He believes there are lessons in Watergate that transcend his own case. He wants, in fact, though he does not say so directly, to begin the process of Watergate revisionism.

Some of his arguments make good sense. He shows, for example, that much of the post-1972 passion for campaign reform, which climaxed in the passage of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974, stemmed from a misreading of the Watergate experience. He dismisses the argument that the break-in occurred because the Republicans had so much money lying around they could indulge nasty impulses that a tighter budget would have required them to resist: "Watergate happened because some persons in authority wanted it to happen; in one way or another they would have financed it, law or no law, surplus or no surplus."

More broadly, he argues that the 1974 law, which provided for government financing of presidential elections and which placed ceilings both on individual contributions and on campaign expenditures, swept through Congress on a wave of indignation over massive corruption in the financing of the 1972 Nixon campaign that, on this book's showing, never occurred. Those violations that did take place, Stans says, were covered under existing law, and he makes a persuasive case that the pre-Watergate campaign act of 1971, which did not limit expenditures but which did require disclosure of all contributions over $100, offered sufficient safeguards against improper financial influence on elections and on political behavior. He takes some consolation from the Supreme Court decision of 1975 which threw out the provisions of the new law limiting expenditures. As for the remaining limits on individual contributions, Stans's reminder that "special-interest money" is not restricted to large personal contributions should recommend itself to reformers currently exercised over the excessive influence of "single-interest" voting groups.

An ill-considered campaign reform law is not, however, in Stans's view, the worst of the results of the Watergate affair. For him, the great untold story of Watergate is that the "terrors of justice" descended not only on Maurice Stans but on countless others who became victims of the "hysteria" of the times. Stans does not deny that Watergate involved real crimes—though he thinks they have been "exaggerated"—but the whole weight of the book is to emphasize the wrongdoings not of the conspirators but of those who, in their eagerness to expose the crimes of Watergate, trampled on the rights and reputations of the innocent.

To Stans, the Watergate investigation stands in the tradition of Salem, frontier vigilante justice, racial lynchings, and the McCarthyism of the 50's; it was, he charges, a witch-hunt, "where accusation was taken for guilt and association with Richard Nixon's administration or reelection campaign was grounds for accusation." Watergate, in fact, "was in most respects a vastly greater and more far-reaching inquisition than anything that had gone before." These themes have eagerly been seized on by ideologues of the Right; the review in *Human Events*, for example, hailed the book for offering, at long last, the beginning of the "real history" of the scandal. This real history, the reviewer suggested, will expose the "official version" of Watergate as "a monstrous, unconscionable distortion of the truth" and reveal the actual record of "a reign of media and government terror unparalleled in American history."

Such a view of Watergate involves, of course, a monumental loss of proportion and lack of perspective. It is simply perverse to summarize the affair as an instance of the McCarthyism of the Left. There are witch-hunts and witch-hunts (as Stans rather lamely concedes at the end of his Salem/Watergate analogy) and we can distinguish among them only by asking certain necessary questions: Were there witches present? What was their nature? Were the weapons chosen to fight them appropriate to the occasion? It is in the face of such questions that an identification of Watergate with McCarthyism disintegrates.

In Watergate there were real witches; they had to be exorcised; and the weapons devised to combat them, while sometimes put to crude or illegitimate uses, were not fundamentally inappropriate. McCarthy had a real enemy (despite what many cold-war revisionists suggest), but he fought Communism largely in the wrong place and with weapons that disabled more innocent than guilty. The innocents of Watergate—and Stans has shown us that there were some—were not, as were the innocents of McCarthyism, the central element in the story. That they were incidental victims does not make their experience less tragic, but neither does that experience rightfully figure as the heart of the matter. In the end, of course, McCarthy's excesses

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

badly discredited the anti-Communist cause. (He had considerable help, it should be noted, from those who, either out of willful ignorance or malicious intent, collapsed all anti-Communism into McCarthyism.) It is unlikely that Stans or anyone else will be able to persuade future generations that the pursuit of the truth of Watergate was so flawed in procedure as to suggest doubts concerning its purposes.

Keeping these distinctions in mind, we can nonetheless assess the *elements* of McCarthyism that did, in fact, creep into the Watergate investigations. One can fully believe that Richard Nixon and his associates deserved everything they got and still acknowledge that the investigation which brought them down included avoidable instances, official and unofficial, of false accusation, abuse and harassment, misrepresentation, and character assassination. There *were* occasions when the affair took on, as Stans says, a "Roman circus atmosphere" and there were too many assumptions of guilt by association. Genuinely innocent men suffered real injuries: loss of friends, loss of income, loss of reputation. Opportunistic politicians and social critics used the weapon of Watergate to settle old scores and to advance their ideological interests. Reporting and analysis by the media too often exceeded the bounds of fair comment. People who should have made it their business to discourage the populist fantasies concerning tyranny and corruption that Watergate inevitably bred instead fostered and nourished them. The Watergate investigation did what it had to do—uncover the crimes of the Nixon administration—but in the process it also did unnecessary damage to civil liberties and to political civility. It would be wrong to argue that partially discreditable means invalidated legitimate ends, but the cause neither of justice nor of historical accuracy would be served by denial of the tainted means.

THE tangled conflict between means and ends presents itself in acute form in consideration of the role of Judge John J. Sirica in the Watergate affair. The advertising for *To Set the Record Straight* describes Sirica as the "one true hero" of Watergate. That view matches the popular perception, but careful analysis of the record suggests that Sirica was a more ambiguous sort of hero than his publishers imagine. Sirica did play a critical part in uncovering the facts of the scandal. The cover-up began to fall apart with James McCord's letter to the judge after the initial burglary trial indicating his willingness to break silence about the conspiracy (though there may well be exaggeration in Sirica's claim that without McCord's letter the case "would never have been broken"). Yet doubts arise concerning Sirica's actions during the first Watergate trial and its aftermath, doubts which his memoir does not dispel.

In the pages of this book, Sirica frequently comes across as a kind of Harry Truman of the judiciary. As Truman did, Sirica clearly thinks of himself as a plain man without supposing for a moment that he is only an ordinary one. Sensitive concerning his limited education (he finished high school at night, skipped college, and only got through law school on the third try after earlier dropping out twice), Sirica, like Truman, compensates for educational deficiencies with brisk decisiveness, firm self-confidence (perhaps not always fully felt), and an uncomplicated assurance that problems can be solved and moralities secured without excessive cerebration, equivocation, or concern with customary rules of procedure. Such a personality is not at home with intellectual uncertainty or moral ambiguity. It is qualities like these that helped Harry Truman make the most momentous political decisions without tortuous agonizing, but sometimes also without sufficient reflection. It is a similar cast of mind that allowed Sirica relentlessly to pursue the deeper truths of Watergate, with little apparent concern—then or now—that in so doing he occasionally bent the rules of judicial behavior.

Sirica's vigorous desire for natural justice and his untroubled sense of right and wrong persuaded him from the outset to use the burglary trial to get at the "truth" of Watergate hidden behind the simple facts of the break-in. His reputation in Washington legal circles as "Maximum John" did not at all hurt his efforts to find that truth. Sirica's reputation, combined with his clear indication of frustration and anger during the course of the trial that those behind the burglary were avoiding detection, no doubt inclined McCord to the view that honesty was, with this judge at least, a prudential policy. It was just four days before he was due to be sentenced that McCord decided to confide in Sirica.

Both before and after McCord broke, Sirica went to considerable lengths to bring the full story of Watergate to the surface. Unsatisfied with the prosecution's efforts to get at the higher-ups behind the burglary, he subjected Hugh Sloan, treasurer of CRP, to intense questioning concerning the origins and intended purposes of the money Sloan had handed over to Liddy. In the course of the questioning, Sirica made abundantly clear his suspicion that Sloan was telling less than the full truth. But Sirica's questioning of Sloan turns out to have added nothing substantial to what had already been revealed in the court record; its only significant effect was to impugn the honesty, before the court and the nation, of a man who, as Sirica himself now admits, had not lied. Yet Sirica feels no need in any way to apologize for his actions in the Sloan interrogation. He has, he says, "no regrets" over his action during the trial: "The more I think about it, the more I believe that it was the proper course to take and in fact the only course to take. . . . Simply stated, I had no intention of sitting on the bench like a nincompoop and watching the parade go by."

Sirica also used sentencing procedure both as a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deterrent and as a method of getting behind the cover-up. Thus in March 1973 he sentenced Liddy to a $40,000 fine and up to 20 years in jail (at several points Sirica reveals the strong dislike he had developed for the "smart-alecky, cocky" Liddy); with the other break-in defendants, he issued "provisional" sentences of 35 to 40 years, on the understanding that those sentences would be reduced if the defendants cooperated with the continuing Watergate grand jury and with the Senate Watergate Committee. Again, Sirica appears entirely unable to understand the "great furor" created by his use of draconian discretionary sentencing in order to coerce testimony on the larger questions related to the case. Federal statutes allow for the provisional sentencing procedure, and Sirica does not find it necessary to meet objections that that procedure was inappropriate in these circumstances. He does insist that he at no time meant to follow through on the threat implicit in the provisional sentences: "I never had any intention whatsoever of putting those men in jail for thirty to forty years," he says. That is reassuring, but it still does not meet the question of the propriety of making the threat in the first place. (Eight months later, Sirica did issue final, lesser sentences to all the defendants except Liddy.)

In assessing the judge's actions in the break-in trial, it is necessary to keep in mind that the prosecutors had their own plans for breaking the cover-up. Sirica himself notes U.S. Attorney Earl Silbert's intention, once he had obtained convictions in the break-in, to give grants of immunity to the burglars and haul them all back before the Watergate grand jury "to give the full story behind the break-in."

One need not be in any measure an apologist for the Watergate criminals to raise questions over Sirica's behavior. Reviewing Sirica's memoir in the *New Republic*, Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., a former national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action and a prominent civil-rights, civil-liberties, and labor lawyer, pointedly notes the statement of the American Bar Association that "the only purpose of a criminal trial is to determine whether the prosecution has established the guilt of the accused as required by law, and the trial judge should not allow the proceedings to be used for any other purpose." Observing that Sirica not only allowed but himself used the proceedings for "other purposes," Rauh concludes that "there was no warrant for Sirica to go beyond his proper judicial role":

> And the statement of the Court of Appeals, in affirming the burglary convictions, that Sirica's conduct of the trial "was in the highest tradition of his office as a federal judge," is more a commentary on anti-Watergate hysteria than a justification for Sirica's misuse of judicial power. This same hysteria brought spokesmen for the greatest civil-liberties organization in the history of the nation (American Civil Liberties Union) . . . to applaud Sirica's conduct. But all of this cannot alter the end-justifies-the-means philosophy that surrounded Sirica's actions.

In the course of his book, Sirica delivers himself of some gratuitous pronouncements on the character and fate of Richard Nixon that are worth noting. At one point, he discloses that had Nixon refused to turn over the tapes to the court, he would have found the President in contempt and forced compliance by levying large daily fines, because, he says, "I knew the President loved money." Sirica also announces that Nixon should not have been pardoned, but should have been indicted and tried, and had he been convicted in Sirica's court, "I would have sent him to jail." To the argument that Nixon could not have been tried because the proceedings would have dragged on for months or even years, disrupting the country, Sirica replies that any such delays would only have come from the defendant himself, and he proceeds to a truly bizarre camparison:

> Nixon's tactic was really the same as the tactic behind the behavior of the Black Panthers and others who in those years disrupted their trials by yelling and throwing things and screaming insults at the judge. Nixon's threatened uproar would have taken the more genteel form of legalistic objections and emotional appeals for sympathy, but that made him no different from the others. The only difference between them was that Nixon got away with it.

The argument here is doubly peculiar. In the first place, even granting that Nixon by his actions in Watergate invited a kind of permanent open season on himself, it still seems excessive to anticipate and criticize behavior on his part that never occurred. He surely has enough real sins to account for that it is not necessary to create imaginary ones for him. Beyond that, it seems incredible that a federal district judge could be so injudicious as to find no distinction between tearing up a courtroom and making "legalistic objections."

IT IS in connection with Richard Nixon that Watergate issues the greatest challenge to our capacity for reasonable judgment. The problem, of course, involves not Nixon's role in Watergate itself—judgments are all too easy to make there—but relating Watergate to our larger conclusions concerning the Nixon Presidency. It will always be impossible to think of Nixon without thinking of the scandal that drove him from office, but severe distortion results when, as is often currently the case, everything in the Nixon years is viewed *sub specie* Watergate. It is probably still too early to establish the necessary distinctions, but the process ought to start soon. (A good place to begin, incidentally, is with Nixon's own memoirs, which are considerably more useful and revealing than many critics have suggested.)

Those who hope to see Nixon given his due will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do well to avoid the approach taken in *The Terrors of Justice*. Stans makes ritual concessions concerning the evils of Watergate, but he still finds it hard to take them all that seriously. The break-in was, he acknowledges, a crime, but it was only "a very minor one except for the political repercussions that followed it" (which is a little like saying that the striking of the iceberg by the *Titanic* was insignificant except for the sinking that followed it). In his handling of the affair, Nixon "stumbled over a molehill," and it still seems to Stans tragically unfair that because of Nixon's "clumsy handling of a small incident" it became possible for a coalition of "opportunistic politicians, an aggressive and hostile media, ambitious prosecutors, and organized 'public-interest' groups" to combine to bring down the administration. The worst that Stans can bring himself to say about Nixon and Watergate is that Nixon was a President "who tried too hard."

It is clearly unacceptable to plead for justice for the Nixon administration on the grounds that Watergate did not make any difference or that it was not the President's fault. Watergate was an ugly and unforgivable business, and Nixon's tragic destiny was of his own making. What the liberals, the commentators, and all the rest of his ancient enemies could not have done to him, Nixon did to himself—and to all of us (particularly those who shared, in varying degrees, in his administration's aims and purposes).

The only path to historical rehabilitation for Richard Nixon will be the recognition that there was more to his administration than Watergate. Stans is unconvincing as an apologist, but he becomes more persuasive when he suggests that there were a great many people who, because they lost their emotional and intellectual balance or because they harbored ideological purposes, unfairly decided after Watergate that everything and everyone associated with the Nixon administration were irredeemably corrupt. Watergate became a symbol of total depravity, and too many people who should have known better swept together under the Watergate umbrella, without discrimination, all that the Nixon people had ever touched. That was unfair; more important, it was historically inaccurate. It is at this point that historical revisionism on Watergate might fruitfully begin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A New Theory of Kashrut

Robert Alter

One of the most memorable illustrations of the dialectical boldness that rabbinic literature could on occasion assume toward its own governing institutions is a statement of the 3rd-century sage, Rav, about the dietary prohibitions. Commenting on a phrase from Psalms (18:31), "the Lord's utterance is pure," Rav asserts: "The commandments were given only to purify people. For what difference does it make to the Holy One whether one slaughters from the throat or the nape? Or what difference does it make to Him whether one eats unclean or clean substances? It follows that the commandments were given only to purify people" (*Midrash Tanhuma, Parashat Shemini*).

Rav's daring is in his willingness to see the whole structure of dietary prohibitions as arbitrary. The more normal mental reflex of someone raised within the system of rabbinic Judaism would be to imagine the proscriptions and permissions to be somehow grounded in the absolute and essential nature of the things themselves: a pig is intrinsically an abominable thing, and God in the instructive mercy of His law has taken measures to protect us from such loathsomeness. Rav, by contrast, insists that what is clean and unclean is fundamentally a matter of definition. Once the system of definition has been granted, it serves as a regimen of spiritual discipline—presumably, as some later Jewish moralists would claim, because it involves delimitation and renunciation—through which man is purified, purged of his bestial dross, somehow elevated. The very term adopted in post-biblical Hebrew for the dietary laws, *kashrut*, would tend to support Rav's notion of their conventional nature, for *kasher* does not mean clean or pure but fit, appropriate, suitable for a given purpose.

The dietary laws have played such an important role in determining the character of Jewish daily life, indeed of Jewish consciousness, and the intricate articulation of banned foods and culinary practices has set the Jews at such variance with surrounding cultures, that great intellectual energies have been expended by both hostile and sympathetic observers to explain the system. In broad terms, one can range the sundry reasons for the dietary laws that have been proposed over the centuries in three groups: pragmatic, symbolic, and therapeutic.

The pragmatic explanations assume that some concrete benefit was conferred or was meant to be conferred on those who respected the prohibitions. Apologists have fancied the notion that the dietary laws were a matter of hygiene, the Hebrew moral vision somehow accompanied by an intuitive Hebrew genius in the field of public health. This line of reasoning will not stand up under scrutiny. It is not even certain that ancient Near Eastern pigs were bearers of trichinosis, and in any case, it is by no means clear why a consumer of clean vegetables like a rabbit should pose a greater health hazard than a goat, with its appetite for refuse as well as for vegetation.

More "scientific" analysts have proposed that biblical man, as we might expect of someone in a primitive society, felt he was ingesting magical potencies and avoiding demonically contaminating substances by eating only the permitted foods. Such condescension toward the primitive mind, as contemporary anthropology has tended to argue convincingly, is quite unwarranted; and what is actually said about eating in the Bible suggests that the ancient Hebrews were on the whole probably less given to magical fantasies about their food than the customers of modern health-food stores. A more historically specific form of pragmatic explanation, which goes back at least as far as Maimonides, is that the banned animals had some particular association with the abominations of the surrounding pagan cults, so that the dietary laws served to insulate ancient Israel from idolatrous practices. Perhaps this may have been a motive in certain signal instances—Isaiah 66:17 gives the impression that there was some lurid pagan rite which involved the consumption of pigs, reptiles, and rats—but such an explanation surely cannot cover all the prohibited animals, from the pelican to the chameleon and the mole.

Finally, broadest of the pragmatic explanations and partly overlapping the anti-pagan line of

Robert Alter, a contributing editor of Commentary, is professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Berkeley. His biography of Stendhal, *A Lion for Love*, will be published by Basic Books in September.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought, is the notion that the dietary laws were intended chiefly to separate Israel socially from all other nations. One can hardly deny that in the Diaspora *kashrut* has been a powerful agency of Jewish solidarity and of separation from the circumambient Gentile world, though there is little reflection in the Bible itself of the separatist consequence of dietary regulations (in the Joseph story, as a matter of fact, it is the Egyptians who will not permit themselves to dine with the Hebrews because what is eaten by the Hebrews is an abomination in Egyptian eyes). Though it is quite likely that the propagators of rabbinic Judaism fully appreciated the socially isolating effect of the dietary laws,* there is not much evidence that this was the chief conscious purpose of the prohibitions, or the chief initial purpose.

The various attempts, then, to explain *kashrut* through some clear pragmatic relation between the Jews and their environment, whether physical, cultic, or social, have not been notably successful.

The therapeutic approach, which is essentially that of Rav, is scarcely more convincing. Regimens of discipline may arguably be thought of in the abstract as good for the soul, but in the test of experience it is hard to see that Muslims, Mormons, Hare-Krishnaites, and others who follow religious dietary codes are necessarily better people for it; and in any case, the therapeutic notion is too general to be in itself a satisfactory principle of explanation: if renunciation is good for us, why this particular system, why no fried squid, or kid seethed in its mother's milk?

The traditional symbolic approach, on the other hand, would seem by contrast to err on the side of excessive specificity of explanation. The impulse here, beginning with Philo of Alexandria, who tried to rationalize Scripture through the supple Greek instrument of allegory, is to sublimate the gross and puzzling particularities of the dietary prohibitions—and of other biblical taboos as well—by assigning to them specific spiritual significations in an elaborate language that the stomach, as it were, is made to speak to the soul. (According to Philo, for example, fins and scales on fish are signs of endurance and self-control, the crawling belly of reptiles is an emblem of gross appetite. A little later, the Midrash Rabba will turn the sundry forbidden animals into symbols of the wicked empires that subjugated Israel.) It is obvious that any symbolic interpretation of these ancient catalogues of prohibitions entails enormous homiletic strain, but, oddly enough, a newfangled version of the symbolic approach has produced the most plausible view of how the whole dietary code functions as a central institution of biblical religion.

THE symbolic approach was first persuasively redefined a decade ago by the British anthropologist Mary Douglas in her lucid study, *Purity and Danger* (1966). Now it has been extended in a challenging way by Jean Soler, a former cultural attaché to the French embassy in Israel, in "The Dietary Prohibitions of the Hebrews," recently published in the *New York Review of Books* (June 14, 1979). Soler says in a note that he was unaware of Mrs. Douglas's work when he wrote the essay in French in the early 70's: some of his main conclusions are remarkably close to hers, but his essay is more wide-ranging and speculative than her chapter, "The Abominations of Leviticus"; in certain instances, it also forces the evidence as she is careful not to do.

The underlying perception shared by Mary Douglas and Jean Soler is that the dietary prohibitions are a kind of language, which is able, through a syntax of actions rather than of words, to order the world along the lines of a particular informing sense of reality. The source of this understanding of systems of taboos would seem to be the Structuralist anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, eclectically in the case of Mrs. Douglas, quite directly for Soler (the French title of his article is a proper emblem of his discipleship: *Sémiotique de la nourriture dans la Bible*). "Our ideas of dirt," Mrs. Douglas observes with refreshing British directness in an introductory chapter, "express symbolic systems." The catalogue of forbidden foods in Leviticus 11 is explicitly linked in the text with the idea of Israel's being holy, even as God is holy, and so Mrs. Douglas quite sensibly construes the dietary rules as a symbolic system intended to express the concept of holiness, which, with attention to its biblical usages, she defines as "unity, integrity, perfection of the individual and of the kind."

If this is both the divine reality and the human ideal, the animals we consume should accord as much as possible with that ideal. Mrs. Douglas concludes that, "In general the underlying principle of cleanness in animals is that they shall conform fully to their class. Those species are unclean which are imperfect members of their class, or whose class itself confounds the general scheme of the world." If one or more of the generic anatomical features of a particular class of animals is missing, the animal is considered unclean. Thus, the pig does not conform to the perfect model of the domesticated meat-animal in a pastoral culture because it is not a ruminant, though it has cloven hoofs. Amphibians and reptiles are the prime model of unclean creatures in this gastronomic language of the holy because they belong to more than one element and because they exhibit an improper means of locomotion for their elements, neither swimming nor walking but slithering and "swarming."

Perhaps the only point where Mrs. Douglas's

* Some commentators on Rav's statement prefer to construe the verb stem *ṣrp* not as "to purify" [people] but as its homonym, "to bind [people] together."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

analysis strays into implausibility is at the very end of her chapter on Leviticus, when she concludes that "the dietary laws would have been like the signs which at every turn inspired meditation on the oneness, purity, and completeness of God." This is to my mind a little too "meditative" a view of eating practices, one which falls back on a characteristic excess of the traditional symbolic interpretations by assuming a very direct and unlikely psychological connection between the ingestive act and the spiritual reality under which it is subsumed. In this one respect, Jean Soler stands on safer ground, for what he suggests is not that the dietary rules can "translate out" into biblical theology but rather that the biblical concept of God and creation and the concept of dietary restrictions exhibit the same syntax, the same mindset, the same ontological assumptions.

What is particularly interesting about Soler's approach to the code of clean and unclean animals is that he connects it both with the inferrable and stipulated dietary regimen of primeval history and with other biblical prohibitions regulating sexual, sartorial, and cultic conduct. He agrees with Mrs. Douglas about the need for unity and integrity in permitted things, observing that an animal with a blemish is prohibited just as a sexually maimed man is not allowed to offer a sacrifice. He develops at length a notion very similar to her central idea of taxonomic consistency, putting particular emphasis on the horror of the hybrid for the Hebrew imagination, whether it is an animal that seems to straddle two realms, a human transvestite, or even a fabric woven of linen and wool. This is, I think, a crucial perception about the way the minds of the biblical writers work.

In precisely this regard, the diametric contrast with the Greeks—a consideration not part of Soler's argument—is instructive. Greek literature from Hesiod onward revels in monstrosity, savors the piquant hybrid character of man-god, man-beast, androgynous, and metamorphic figures. Biblical literature, preferring realms to be distinct and generic identities to be stable, virtually excludes such hybrids. Even in a mythological vestige like the story of the sons of God copulating with the daughters of man in Genesis 6, no concrete imagination of that crossbred progeny—the Nephilim or giants in the earth—is allowed to develop, and the whole shadowy memory of this non-monotheistic mingling of species is invoked with a recollection of God's sharp displeasure over what occurred. Soler, in a similar vein, shrewdly observes that the decisive break between Judaism and Christianity came when the founders of Christianity chose to see in Jesus a God-man, for such a hybrid violated a basic assumption of the Hebrew imagination that had been expressed for over a millennium in everything from theology and narrative invention to social institutions and dietary laws.

Soler develops another suggestive implication of the principle of taxonomic consistency in arguing that biblical legislation strove to keep separate not only entities generically opposed but also those that exhibited a dangerous closeness. In this fashion, he can bracket together the biblical incest taboo with the enigmatic ban on cooking a kid in its mother's milk, wittily observing: "You shall not put a mother and her son into the same pot, any more than into the same bed." For this would violate the basic ordering principle which, as he has been strenuously arguing, lies behind all biblical thinking, on culinary and on other matters—the commitment to "upholding the separation between two classes or types of relationships." For "everything belongs to one species only, one people, one sex, one category . . . one God."

I am convinced that Soler has grasped something important about the distinctive conceptual system of classical Judaism. Indeed, though he does not attempt to deal with the rabbinic dietary code, it would splendidly confirm his central thesis, for its main generative mechanism is the proliferation of spheres of separation and separating devices. From the prohibition of a kid in its mother's milk the rabbis extrapolate a global separation of meat from dairy foods, involving separate dishes and pots and pans for meat and dairy meals, and separate eating surfaces. If more than a sixty-fourth part of meat should accidentally fall into a pot of dairy food, or vice versa, the food must be discarded, for opposed realms have been mingled, the sustaining substance of mammalian life and the flesh of a slaughtered animal have been confounded, an ontological hybrid has been made. It seems to me, then, that in some respects Soler's argument is profoundly right. But certain of his emphases also strike me as misleading, even a little disquieting, and I think these deserve reflection because they illustrate some of the dangers in generalizing about the "Hebrew mind," a set of collective mental attributes which Soler in his final paragraph imagines operating in unbroken continuity from the Bible to modern Israel (where, one should remember, he served as a diplomat).

THE first category of flaw in Soler's analysis is seemingly minor but it ends up having large consequences in the ultimate implications of his argument, and that is, quite simply, his Structuralist tendency to tidy up uneven data in order to preserve the perfect neatness of the semiotic system he is describing. This tidying up is achieved either by rhetorical manipulation of the data or by small factual distortions of data inconvenient to his thesis. A signal instance of the former fallacy occurs near the beginning of his essay when he claims that circumcision, the Sabbath, and the dietary code all "fulfill the same function" because all involve a cut—"a cut on the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

male sex organ . . . , a cut in the regular course of days . . . , a cut in the continuum of the created animals." And since in the current French view semiotic systems are nothing if not self-referential, Soler can construe these supposed cuts as an indication of how the whole symbolic apparatus produces meaning: "The cut is at the origin of differentiation and differentiation is the prerequisite of signification."

Now, this is plain nonsense because the cut that supposedly unites the three laws exists only in Soler's language of description. One could produce very different conclusions—indeed, almost any conclusions one wanted—by deciding to describe circumcision not as a cut but as an impairment, a wound, a transformation, a cosmetic improvement, an uncovering, and then applying *that* term metaphorically to the Sabbath and the dietary laws. The point is not merely that Soler is mistaken in a particular interpretative maneuver, which, after all, does not really undermine his main thesis, but that he gives the impression of a perfect symbolic consistency, a uniform mental set, inhering in the biblical laws, when the cultural facts of the matter may be rather more variegated and even contradictory. Elsewhere, for example, he makes a great deal of the Hebrews' supposed uneasiness about fermentation—hence the sanctity of unleavened bread—explaining it as an ontological preference for things in their natural state, unaltered (or, as he says, "unblemished") by processes of transformation. But if this is really so, why enjoin circumcision? The great pitfall in this rhetorical superimposition of consistent symbolism on diverse cultural data is that it is a game anyone can play and, with enough ingenuity, anyone can win.

Other bothersome data resist rhetorical manipulation and so must be ignored or altered in order to preserve the symmetry of the system. Thus, following the principle of appropriate mode of locomotion for the permitted animals, Soler claims that "If a bird has wings but does not fly . . . , it is unclean," overlooking the egregious exception of the chicken, nowhere prohibited in the biblical code and destined one day to become the mainstay of kosher cuisine. In the next breath, hewing to the logic of his analysis rather than to the facts, Soler asserts that if a bird "has wings and can fly but spends most of its time in the water instead of living in the air, it is unclean," casting a gratuitous shadow of suspicion on the permissibility of the perfectly kosher duck. To illustrate this untenable point, Soler then cites the heron and the pelican, which are in fact banned in Leviticus 11, and the swan, which is not mentioned in the biblical text. Admittedly, the identification of many zoological terms in the Bible is far from certain, but if there is any likely candidate for swan it would be the *barburim* of 1 Kings 5:3, which are part of King Solomon's diet (alternately, that term might refer to a kind of goose, still another exception to the Soler-Douglas principle of appropriate locomotion). In any case, the swan may have been a *rara avis* in the Jewish menu but it was a distinctly permissible one, even figuring in a popular Sabbath hymn (*Yom Zeh Mekhubad*) as the first element in an ideal Sabbath feast along with quail and fish. Such exceptions do not invalidate the general perception that the dietary prohibitions are informed by a predisposition to affirm taxonomic order in the created world, but any cultural system is likely to exhibit anomalies, inconsistencies, haphazardly determined elements—to be governed, in other words, by a predominant syntax but not by an inviolable grammar.

My objections to these incidental errors would be mere quibbles were it not for the fact that by making the logic of the system seem perfectly regular and consistent in all instances, Soler projects a model of the Hebrew mind that is utterly inexorable and automatic in its adherence to the principle of preserving sharp distinctions. The last sentence of his essay is particularly troubling in this regard: "This [Mosaic] logic, which sets up its terms in contrasting pairs and lives by the rule of refusing all that is hybrid, mixed, or arrived at by synthesis and compromise, can be seen in action to this day in Israel, and not only in its cuisine."

If Soler, as a French diplomat formerly stationed in Israel, intends this as a casual concluding witticism, it is in singularly bad taste. The questionable semantic slide from the rejection of hybrids to the rejection of synthesis and compromise should be apparent to anyone who thinks about the meanings of words, and it vividly illustrates the danger of proposing confident paradigms of the Hebrew mind. Was it the Mosaic disinclination to compromise that led the Israelis to accept the partition of Palestine in 1947 even as it was being vehemently rejected by every Arab state? Does the biblical heritage somehow make the Israelis demonstrably more unbending than the Arabs, the Russians, the Germans, the French? To look at the matter historically, it is hard to see how the Talmud—so much more decisive than the Bible in the shaping of a Jewish mentality—with its commitment to subtle dialectical analysis, fits into this notion of avoiding synthesis and of thinking in neat binary oppositions; and Soler's categorization is even less appropriate for the kabbalistic tradition, enamored as it is of paradox and multiple meanings.

The Bible itself, moreover, is by no means so singleminded as Soler would have us think in its dedication to taxonomic clarity. If biblical creation, as both he and Mary Douglas contend, is neatly hierarchical, sharply defining all creatures according to their kind, that generalization holds much better for the ordered choreography of Gen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

esis 1 than for the version of creation given in Genesis 2-3, which centers on man and is by contrast dynamic, unstable, precarious. The Bible in fact sets up a strong tension, beginning with these three initial chapters, between cosmogony, and its mirroring in ritual, on the one hand, and psychology, history, and moral and political behavior on the other hand. The former is indeed a realm of orderly progression and firm demarcation; the latter sphere is repeatedly characterized by uncertainty, unpredictable reversals, ambiguity, imponderability. One can hardly discount the fact that among all ancient writers it was the biblical authors who developed an elaborate narrative technique for suggesting the multiplicity and ambiguity of motives and feelings,* and a culture's conventions for the literary presentation of human character are surely as valid a guide to its ways of thinking about reality as its regulations regarding clean and unclean animals.

If Soler's admirably useful proposals on the mechanisms of the Hebrew mind lend themselves to abuse because he makes them too ubiquitous, there is one aspect of his approach to the dietary code that suffers not through a simplification of data but through interpretative overreach. It is what I would consider a grave error connected with one of his most important perceptions—that there is an implicit vegetarian bias in the biblical attitude toward food, even as various kinds of meat are permitted. Very briefly, the vegetarian argument runs as follows: In the ideal state of the garden, Adam and Eve consume only growing things. After the deluge, meat is explicitly permitted to the offspring of Noah, but with an emphatic ban on ingesting the blood together with the meat; so that the draining of the blood, a substance the text powerfully equates with the life of the animal, is a kind of symbolic gesture in the direction of a vegetarianism no longer feasible because of man's imperfect nature, his inability to free himself entirely from his own predatory impulses. In the wilderness narratives, the Israelite fondness for meat is placed in considerable disrepute; and the dietary prohibitions themselves are an elaborate set of limitations on carnivorous activity: if man insists on eating meat, he must be reminded at every turn that the permission has been granted grudgingly, with whole categories of the animal kingdom closed off to him.

Now, this argument about an aspiration to prelapsarian vegetarianism in the dietary code has been made before—perhaps most notably in recent times by Rav Kook, the Orthodox mystic and chief rabbi of Israel, who embraced the vegetarian ideal—but not with the theological interpretation that Soler gives it. Locked into his Structuralist notion of binary oppositions, Soler conceives the vegetarian tendency in biblical thinking as a legislation of the difference between man and God. Man should have only limited access to the flesh of living creatures because that is God's prerogative. "God's [foods] are the living beings, which in the form of sacrifices (either human victims, of which Abraham's sacrifice represents a relic, or sacrificial animals) serve as his 'nourishment,' according to the Bible."

The last phrase here, with those rather shifty quotation marks around "nourishment," creates the impression that the Bible itself uses such a term to describe sacrifices, but in fact the metaphor of nourishment is entirely the writer's invention, and the whole notion of a carnivorous Hebrew God can be derived only by a sweeping disregard of textual evidence and historical chronology. A French Structuralist should hardly need to be reminded that a single signifier can point to very different things being signified, depending on context and on the cultural code in which it operates. The pagan practice of animal sacrifice was taken over by ancient Israel, for at that time and place any other mode of worship was scarcely imaginable, but the meaning of animal sacrifice, as the Israeli Bible scholar Yehezkel Kaufmann cogently argued a generation ago, was radically transformed. The familiar ancient Near Eastern idea that man was feeding the gods was rigorously eliminated, an accomplished fact readily corroborated by an inspection of the relevant biblical texts. As far back as the 8th century B.C.E., when Isaiah thundered against the outrage of people offering sacrifice with figuratively bloody hands, it did not even occur to him to counter any popular belief (which surely would have been grist for his satiric mill) that the sacrifices were providing nourishment to God. Instead, he simply pillories the idea that the sacrificial cult is a religiously efficacious system independent of morality, and reminds his audience that morality is God's primary concern.

Soler's reference to human sacrifice is an even grosser confusion of pre-monotheistic practices and assumptions with those of the Bible. The main point about the binding of Isaac is that it is a divinely *averted* sacrifice: whatever troubling memories of archaic rites may echo in the story, the meaning of its denouement is that for the God of Abraham, human sacrifice is to be replaced by animal sacrifice, Isaac on the altar by the ram caught in the thicket. The Hebrew Bible is notoriously rich in its vocabulary of abomination (half a dozen potent synonyms come to mind), so it may be a little risky to try to identify particular practices that are abominated with special intensity. Nevertheless, there are some indications that the two kinds of transgressions which seemed most loathsome to the biblical legislators and narrators, far more than the consumption of any un-

* I have recently tried to show in these pages how that technique works in "Character in the Bible," October 1978.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clean animal, were human sacrifices and what used to be called unnatural sexual acts. The strength of feeling against incest, homosexuality, and bestiality can be plausibly explained in Soler's terms because these acts flagrantly involve human bodies and feelings in a confusion of identities and a distortion of the dividing lines between natural kinds —male and female, human and animal. The horror of human sacrifice, almost always specified as the immolation of one's own son or daughter, would appear to derive from another principle: that the boon of life granted to every human being is precious, that it confers on one a set of solemn obligations to preserve life, and therefore that the ultimate abomination is to destroy in the name of service to a divinity the life one has produced, reversing procreation through murder.

Let me take this notion back to vegetarianism, for what it begins to suggest is that *la pensée biblique* does not express a single monolithic logic but may reflect at least two complementary, perhaps sometimes competing, logics, with specified laws or series of laws often "overdetermined" by both. If God looks askance at man's carnivorous impulse, it is not to draw a zone of difference between man and God but, quite to the contrary, because God wants man to emulate Him. The Bible begins by showing God performing a magisterial series of acts of creation and recognizing that each one of them is good. Man is then enjoined to exercise mastery over the world and to procreate: just as God makes life, man's obligation is to make more life, within the limits of his natural means. One of God's notable attributes as the omnipotent, eternal maker of life is that He does not consume life—Soler's confusion here of Israelite faith with Canaanite religion is a cardinal error. Man, of course, as a created being needs material food to sustain himself, but if he could have continued in his Edenic state, he would have consumed only fruits and vegetables, excluding the destruction of sentient life from his regimen of survival, in harmonious correspondence to his Creator.

This notion of the preservation and enhancement of life as it is articulated in the Bible is by no means a sentimental one. It may seem to accord comfortably with our own ecological or humanitarian preferences, but as a cultural logic it springs from an ultimately imponderable axiom, as does the logic of differentiation expounded by Soler and Mrs. Douglas. For just as there is no way of explaining why the separation of species should be intrinsically preferable to their intermingling, one cannot finally explain why life should be thought of as intrinsically good, a property to be reproduced and in normal peaceful circumstances to be held inviolate. Quite a few cultures before and since have thought otherwise, and the dissemination in so many societies of practices like infanticide, ritual murder, human sacrifice, geronticide, and suicide suggests that very different conclusions could be drawn by civilized peoples about what attitude to adopt toward this trying, inscrutable, evanescent experience of life to which we are born and which is born all around us.

THE dietary prohibitions, then, may well express a sense for the necessity of taxonomic order in the world, built on a principle of firm differentiation. But far from differentiating man from God, they are intended to lead man into the greatest possible resemblance to Him. This is a point the biblical lawmaker insists on through the emphatic repetition of a connecting key term at the beginning of his formal conclusion to the dietary code in Leviticus 11: "For I am the Lord your God; you shall make yourselves holy and be holy, for I am holy; and you shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls upon the earth. For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God, and you shall be holy, for I am holy." To the static qualities of unity, integrity, and generic perfection that Mrs. Douglas adduces as explanations of the meaning of holiness I should like to add one dynamic attribute: vitalism. God is a living God and His commandments, as the Bible tells us again and again, confer life on those who observe them.

God's essential nature as a sustainer of life does call into question our human propensity, or perhaps virtual necessity, to live off other life. But if the authors of the Levitical code cast even a fleeting glance at the possibility of a vegetarian solution, they must have realized it would be popularly unacceptable and perhaps nutritionally and economically imprudent. For an unfeasible renunciation, then, they substituted an elaborate system of restriction.

With regard to the criteria of restriction, I think that Mrs. Douglas and Soler are by and large right. Exponents of a culture that tended to see the world in securely defined hierarchies, the biblical legislators limited edibility chiefly to those creatures that seemed to fit safely into the categories of classification, excluding whatever had the look of indeterminacy or amorphousness, and whichever creatures of land and air manifestly preyed on other creatures—in sum, everything in the zoological realm that seemed in any way dissonant with the principle of ordered, shaped creation, everything that roused dim uneasy recollections of the primordial chaos and void out of which God called the world into being.

In this connection, the initially puzzling invocation of the exodus from Egypt at the end of the dietary code is thematically apt. The parallel between the exodus and the creation will become a fixed liturgical motif. Out of a shapeless swarm of slaves—who, pointedly, yearn nostalgically for the fleshpots of Egypt—God gave Israel the coherence and the identity of a covenanted people. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

process of liberation begins with the mass escape from the Egyptian slavemasters, but it is completed only with the acceptance of the Law. Both the world and the nation come into being through the establishment of lawful hierarchy. The Hebrew aspiration to resemble God by making man holy is a staggering spiritual project, for the object of emulation is, after all, ultimately unknowable; at best, only certain of His attributes can be inferred from the revelations He has vouchsafed. Perhaps that is why the system of laws through which holiness is to be realized must be in many respects enigmatic, proceeding with a logic that is often hidden and sometimes ungraspable.

Hebrew social and moral legislation, of course, has its own self-evident rationale, even in cases where the biblical assumptions may offend modern sensibilities. But in regard to the laws regulating diet, cult, dress, and sex, it is an advance in understanding to see them, as Jean Soler and Mary Douglas have proposed, not primarily as a response to pragmatic pressures of the environment or as direct, quasi-allegorical expressions of spiritual concepts but as interrelated, internally coherent systems for ordering the world. The one great danger in this way of conceiving the function and meaning of the traditional laws is the temptation to reduce all biblical injunctions—and implicitly, their post-biblical extensions as well—to a single elegant common denominator. The tradition itself is more various, more interestingly contradictory than that.

CLEARLY, there are recurrent concpetual themes in the Bible and also certain suggestive if uneven lines of continuity between the biblical world and the successive historical stages of later Jewish life. But what should be avoided at all costs is to reintroduce ethnic stereotypes into serious intellectual discourse by constructing in the name of semiotic analysis a monolithic Hebrew mind that dominates the actions of Jews from Leviticus to the Likud. The Jewish historical experience through nearly three and a half millennia has surely exhibited more than a single consistent strategy for ordering reality: indeed, the persistent polyphony of Jewish culture may ultimately be one of the secrets of this peculiar people's survival.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wandering Jews

Edouard Roditi

THE legend of the Wandering Jew, of his miraculous longevity and of the curse that drives him to travel ceaselessly through the centuries until the Second Coming of Christ, appears to have originated at a relatively late date and only in certain countries of Central and Western Europe. No trace of such a figure can be found in medieval literature. The first records of his real or imagined appearances in European history date from the early Renaissance, or, more precisely, from the Reformation. There were, however, two other legends concerning an individual of miraculous longevity current in the Middle Ages, and these may have served as a basis for the later Wandering Jew legend.*

The first of the two legends, which may ultimately be midrashic in origin (it also appears in the Koran), concerns the craftsman who made the Golden Calf while the Israelites were in the desert. When Moses came down from Sinai, according to the story, he cursed this craftsman, Alsamir by name, for what he had done and condemned him to wander the world until the end of days. When approached by another human being in the course of these wanderings, Alsamir was enjoined to cry out, like a medieval leper: "*Noli me tangere*! Do not touch me!"

The second of the two legends has some historic underpinning. It tells of an Armenian bishop who came to Western Europe from the Near East during the time of the Crusades. After visiting Rome and Paris, the Bishop went on to St. Albans in England, where a member of his retinue reported that one of Jesus' disciples—the Apostle John, who had been his favorite—was still alive in Armenia, thus fulfilling Jesus' prophecy that John would remain alive until the Second Coming. (It should be noted that this legend appears to have originated in a region—south of the Caucasus—where cases of astounding longevity continue to be reported to this day.)

Though there are no references in medieval texts to the Wandering Jew, some later chronicles claim that such a figure had already appeared by the Renaissance—in one instance that he had been identified in Strasbourg as early as 1250, and in others that he first appeared in Brussels around the middle of the 15th century, at the court of Philip the Good. Both these assertions, however, occur in texts that were written and published much later, and neither of the supposed appearances is attested to by any contemporary witness or document. It was not for another hundred years, in the 1550's, that the legend of the Wandering Jew really began to spread and gain credibility, thanks to the testimony of persons of good faith who supposedly met and conversed with him or who sincerely believed that they had. In these legends, he goes by a variety of names: Cartaphilus, Simon of Cyrene, Isaac Laquedem, and—most mysteriously—Ahasuerus. How the name of the king of Persia became attached to this legend is nowhere explained.

Of that first reputed appearance in Strasbourg in 1250 virtually no details are given, but the account of the second episode—in Brussels—is extremely specific. It is supposed to have occurred during the solemn annual performance of the Mystery play, *The Passion of Christ*, which takes place during Holy Week. In this play, Jesus, tottering beneath the weight of the cross he must carry, turns toward a man in the crowd, Simon of Cyrene, and beseeches his help. Simon rejects the plea with a taunt, to which Jesus replies: "Go straight ahead and wander, and you will never cease to wander until the end of days, without ever finding any respite or being able to cease your fatal wanderings."

According to the chronicle which relates this story, the actor playing the part of Jesus had just finished speaking these lines when a moan was heard from the foot of the dais on which Duke Philip was sitting. A stranger in Oriental dress was found lying there unconscious, and was carried to the duke's palace. The next day, having recovered from his faint, the stranger was invited to attend a banquet at the ducal table. Here it was observed that the stranger's forehead was covered with a bandage—supposedly to conceal an unsightly scar (the Cain motif) and that he did not eat, but only pretended to do so, dropping his food under the table so that not a morsel touched his lips.

The next night, one of the duke's pages was amazed to come upon the stranger fighting with the duke's dogs for possession of some bones that had been left out for them. He was doing so by the light

EDOUARD RODITI *is an American poet and art historian who lives in Paris.*

*An obvious underlying source for the motif of the Wandering Jew is of course the biblical story of Cain, who in punishment for the murder of his brother Abel was marked and condemned to wander the earth. In later Christian typology, Cain's fate was seen as a prefiguration of the punishment meted out to the Jews for their part in the crucifixion of Jesus.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a fiery cross that was now revealed, the bandage having come undone, in the middle of his forehead. This same motif is repeated in another report, published in the 19th century, which claims that the Wandering Jew appeared in 1533 in the Dutch university town of Leyden. There he is described as follows: "One could count on his brow sixteen clearly traced furrows. In the last of these, his skin was puckered so as to form a small cross, so deeply graven there that it could easily be mistaken for a curious scar."

UP UNTIL this point, the reports, even when detailed, belong to the category of folklore and have no pretensions to historical accuracy. Toward the middle of the 16th century, however, the appearance of persons believed to be the Wandering Jew not only became more frequent, but were accompanied by some semblance of documentation. Often, they were attested to by several trustworthy witnesses who have left evidence of unimpeachable historical value. In 1547, for instance, the Bishop of Schleswig testified that he had met the Wandering Jew in Hamburg and questioned him in detail on his personal memories of his meeting with Christ. Another interview with the mysterious wanderer is likewise recorded a few years later in Strasbourg. In 1575, two diplomatic representatives of the Duchy of Holstein claimed to have encountered the wanderer in Madrid, in spite of the decree of 1492 that expelled all Jews from Spain. In 1599, the Wandering Jew was reportedly seen in Vienna, in 1601 in the Hanseatic city of Luebeck, then in 1610 in the Baltic Duchy of Livonia, in Cracow, and even in Moscow. In 1640, he reappeared in Brussels.

It is noteworthy that most of these sightings occurred in areas of Europe that were already predominantly Protestant or, like Brussels, Strasbourg, and Vienna, close to Protestant areas. Moscow, Cracow, and Madrid are exceptions, though in Madrid the mysterious stranger supposedly revealed his identity only to visiting diplomats of a foreign Protestant power. In most recorded instances the wanderer was well received by practitioners of the new Lutheran faith, which would accord with the legend that he had repented of his crime and become a Christian, and hence need not be banished or confined to the ghetto as other Jews would have been: "Immediately after the Pentecost, the Apostles began to preach the Gospel and the wretched Cartaphilus, who had already witnessed the many miracles that occurred at the time of the death and the resurrection of the Son of Man, felt the urge to expiate his sin. He therefore asked to be baptized and received his baptism by the hand of Ananias, who had already baptized St. Paul. And he was thus baptized under the name of Joseph, in order to replace Cartaphilus, the name under which he had been cursed."

DURING the 1700's and 1800's there was a marked increase in supposed manifestations of the Wandering Jew (accompanied by more serious attempts at documentation) throughout Central and parts of Western Europe and especially in the various German states as well as in Bohemia, Moravia, Alsace, Lorraine, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, the Low Countries, Denmark, and even England. These appearances coincide rather significantly with the vast westward migration of Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Jews that began around 1640 and continued until after the Napoleonic wars. Though it has been neglected by many social historians, this movement greatly enriched popular tradition and iconography through the addition of such colorful characters as the *Packjude* (peddler) and the *Schnorrer* (mendicant) who became well-known figures in the market towns of Central Europe—especially in cities like Leipzig, which held annual trade fairs—and even along the highways and in the more remote villages and hamlets of certain regions.

The Swedish and Muscovite invasions of Lithuania and Poland, the revolts of the Cossacks and their massacres of Jews in the Ukraine and Eastern Poland, and finally the successive dismemberments of the kingdom of Poland, had reduced the Jewish communities of these vast regions of Eastern Europe to extreme poverty. Tens of thousands of their members, both rich and poor, were seeking escape to safer and more hospitable lands. Most of these refugees headed toward the West, but some also went into Scandinavia and the Baltic area, while others fled eastward into the interior of Russia, and still others went south, into Hungary and the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman empire. Among Sephardic Jews of Near Eastern extraction, family names like Eskanazi still testify to the infusion during this period of Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Jews into the Sephardic communities of such cities as Sarajevo, Salonica, Constantinople, and Smyrna. Another common Jewish surname, Polack (or Bolag in the Allemanic dialect), is also traceable to this period of the settlement of Polish Jews in the German-speaking communities of Central and Western Europe.

Between 1648 and 1700, Jewish immigrants from Poland were well received, on the whole, in a few cities of the Hanseatic League and in most of the Protestant states of Germany, whose Jewish communities were just beginning to recover from the destruction and impoverishment of the Thirty Years' War. Jews were also received with relative cordiality in the Netherlands; in Altona, which was still part of the kingdom of Denmark; in Bohemia and Moravia; and also in some Catholic areas of the Rhineland and Bavaria, where they were permitted to settle in existing Jewish communities. Traders who had capital to dispose of could get a permit to settle fairly easily and on a permanent basis, and the same was true of tailors, leather workers, glass blowers, cutters of gems and lenses, furriers, dyers, and printers, who were in a position to begin practicing their trades immediately. Many a Jewish family name, such as Ferber or Lederer, still commemorates an ancestor who was granted such a permit. Others who were allowed to settle with relative ease, though only in communities which could prove that their services were really needed, were rabbis, teachers, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other scholars and community functionaries, like cantors or ritual butchers.

Among the more educated refugees who were granted such permits, and thereby saved from an outcast, wandering existence, one finds a considerable number of printers and proofreaders, who contributed a great deal to the expansion and success of Jewish presses in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, especially in Amsterdam, Frankfurt-am-Main, Prague, and ultimately in London. One also finds the names of many rabbis who had come originally from Poland listed in the archives of nearly all the major Jewish communities of Central and Western Europe. Rabbi Jonathan Eisenschuetz, for example, whose legal opinions are still cited in Orthodox communities, lived in the city of Metz, in Lorraine, from 1741 to 1750; and Rabbi Judah Loeb, born in the Polish town of Krotoschin, lived in Austria, Germany, and Holland, before being appointed to the community of Carpentras, in Southern France. Rabbis of Polish origin are likewise known to have settled in Venice, Livorno, Ferrara, and other Italian cities with expanding Jewish communities.

As Prussia, Austria, and Russia proceeded with the first stage of Poland's dismemberment, the emigration of Polish Jews increased in volume. So massive and socially indiscriminate an influx soon began to pose serious problems of economic integration and assimilation both to Jewish communities doing their best to absorb the refugees, and to local authorities in those regions where the immigrants were seeking to settle. Between 1773 and 1784, Prussia, which had at first been very hospitable to Jews, particularly in Berlin, Koenigsberg, and Frankfurt-am-Oder, felt obliged to expel some 7,000 of the poorest refugees from the provinces of Western Poland which it had recently annexed, forcing them back into the reduced and impoverished remnant of Central Poland. Austria then followed suit, expelling some 2,000 Jews from Galicia.

Further instances of expulsion can be multiplied, not only from German states but also from Jewish communities which were forbidden in most cases to harbor outsiders for any length of time. It has been estimated that there were at least 5,000 of these homeless Jews of Polish origin wandering about the highways of Central Europe in the latter half of the 18th century.

Many of these unfortunates died of exhaustion and privation; others were absorbed into the underworld, where their existence is still commemorated by a number of Yiddish words—*Schlemiehl, Ganovenehre, Dalles*—which have found their way into German slang. Still others, in despair, accepted baptism or became followers of the false messiah, Jacob Frank, whose adherents enjoyed a remarkable if somewhat ambiguous freedom for a while, both in Catholic Poland and in a few cities of Catholic Western and Southern Germany. Frank held court with a guard of honor in the city of Offenbach, like a princeling of the Holy Roman Empire. (The mysterious 18th-century Baal Shem of London, famous in his day as an alchemist and kabbalistic miracle worker, appears to have been a Frankist and, though born in Bavaria, was very probably of Polish extraction, since nearly all the Frankists were Polish Jews.)

In the memoirs of his travels in Central and Western Europe, the great Russian writer Karamzin, a typical representative of 18th-century Enlightenment liberalism, described with great vividness his contrasting impressions of the Jewish community of Frankfurt-am-Main, which then belonged to the kingdom of Prussia and could harbor wandering Polish Jews more freely than other Jewish communities of the area. Karamzin relates how, on the one hand, Frankfurt's Jewish upper class (which then included the founder of the House of Rothschild, among others) numbered so many ardent theatergoers in its ranks that its boycott of a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* could force the local theater to stop playing it. On the other hand, Karamzin describes his shock at the extreme destitution of many of the Jews he found wandering in the streets of the ghetto.

Even the more benign authorities would not provide more than temporary shelter. Thus, the Prince-Bishop of Wuerzburg, in Catholic Bavaria, was relatively merciful in his policy of admitting Jewish vagabonds into his territory, but would not allow them to establish themselves in any numbers on a permanent basis. As a result, several thousand *Betteljuden* ("beggar Jews") wandered constantly from one community to another within his territories, frequently organized in nomadic bands whose appearance terrified travelers and local residents alike. So prevalent was the problem that many Jewish communities of Bavaria and Franconia obtained permission to build special almshouses where the vagabonds could be sheltered for at least a few days. The community official entrusted with the task of distributing billeting permits was known, in the local Judeo-German dialect, as a *Plettengabbe* (derived from the French word *billet,* meaning a ticket, and the Hebrew word *Gabbay*, meaning a community official or administrator).

In a single year, the Jewish communities of the Wuerzburg area alone distributed 68,000 such billeting tickets. Even the tiny Jewish community of Goisheim, with a total of 26 families, distributed 650 tickets in the course of a single year, which, taking into account the food, clothing, and other charitable services offered, added up to an enormous contribution from each householder. One resident of the town, the Jewish bookseller Joseph Isaac, published a pamphlet in 1791 ("Reflections on the *Betteljuden* and their more Efficient Care") in which he proposed to teach the wanderers useful trades and skills in order to integrate them more easily into existing communities. Oddly enough, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre had published a similar pamphlet a few decades earlier proposing to make better use of the French nobility by training its members to become competent civil servants rather than useless courtiers in Versailles.

In France, the situation was on the whole less serious than it was in the German and Austrian areas, except

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for Alsace, Lorraine, and the former Papal territories of the Comtat Venaissin in Provence. Here the existence of Jewish communities that had been prominent since the Middle Ages seemed to attract the more venturesome—or the desperate—among the vagrants, causing great hardship to local Jewish residents. Thus, in the year 1773, a small army of several hundred *Betteljuden,* most of whom had come originally from Poland, tried to force their way into the four historic communities of the Comtat Venaissin, after having been rejected everywhere else. The communities of Avignon, Carpentras, and Cavaillon managed to fight them off, whereupon they attacked the small community of Isle-sur-Sorgues, which agreed under duress to accept about a quarter of the group —the sick, pregnant women, and families with infants. The following day, the rest of the group returned in a threatening mood, and the terrified Jewish community had to summon the royal police force to drive the attackers away. Four days later, another band of about a hundred vagabonds descended on the same community; its members barricaded themselves in their houses until the police from nearby Avignon came to their rescue.

During the period just before and after the French revolution, these roving bands of *Betteljuden* constituted a public danger. In 1790, a year after the fall of the Bastille, the municipality of Lixheim complained that "squadrons" of vagabonds were arriving daily, and the problem continued to preoccupy Central and Western European authorities on and off until the middle of the 19th century.

Eventually, thanks to the expanding economy, the liberalization of various political regimes, and the rapid growth of many urban centers in the aftermath of the industrial revolution, the few thousand *Betteljuden* who had survived their wanderings and privations managed to become integrated into this part of Europe, along with new arrivals from the East. Nevertheless, as late as 1821, in the Canton of Aarau in supposedly freedom-loving and liberal Switzerland, there were only two small rural communities, Lengnau and Oberendingen, in which Jews were permitted to reside. It was in that Canton in the small town of Mumpf that a kindly innkeeper took pity on a young couple with a small child who came to his door one night in the midst of a raging snowstorm. Because the wife was in an advanced state of pregnancy, the innkeeper let them in, though it was forbidden by law to house these homeless Jews. That very night (January 28, 1821) a daughter was born to the couple. She grew up to become the world-famous actress, Rachel—the toast of Paris, and a great patron of literature and the arts.

GIVEN this historical background, it is not difficult to conclude that more than one unfortunate Polish Jew must have been tempted from time to time to exploit the credulity of some gullible Gentile by claiming to be that legendary Wandering Jew who would be granted the hospitality denied all other Jews. The fact that nearly all popular representations of the Wandering Jew in 19th-century prints and cartoons portray him in the traditional fur cap of the Jews of Poland and the Ukraine would seem to argue as much.

After all, these nomadic Jews of the 18th century were not all uneducated vagrants. There were individuals among them like the philosopher Solomon Maimon, now remembered as a disciple of Kant and a brilliant representative of the Jewish Enlightenment, who experienced several years of impoverished wanderings before being allowed to settle in Prussia. The scholar Zalkind Hurwitz, too, made the trek from Kovno, where he had been born into a family of Lithuanian rabbis, to Berlin, to Metz, then finally to Paris, where, in 1789, he published his historical *Apology on Behalf of the Jews,* which proved extremely influential in bringing about the emancipation of French Jewry.

Individuals of this caliber, if they happened to be mistaken for the Wandering Jew, would have been able to answer with ease, and no doubt with some mischievous irony too, the questions that might be put to them about their alleged seventeen centuries of wanderings. As to their fabulous longevity and astonishing appearance of youth, there was an explanation available in the popular folklore: "Each time the Wandering Jew reaches the age of a hundred years, an apparently incurable disease overcomes him, leading to a loss of consciousness from which he is then reborn, fully cured and again with the physical appearance that he had at the time of Christ's Passion. . . ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Evil & William Styron

Pearl K. Bell

In an introductory note to *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, his brooding story of the Negro preacher who led the only significant slave revolt in American history, William Styron wrote that he had tried "to produce a work that is less an 'historical novel' in conventional terms than a meditation on history." His new novel, *Sophie's Choice*,* is also, in part, a meditation on history, a gravely ambitious attempt to confront the truth of the Nazi death camps and to define the moral legacy of the Holocaust not only for the Jews but for all of humanity.

The Nazi slaughter of eleven million European Jews and Gentiles may seem a curious choice of subject for William Styron, an Anglo-Saxon Presbyterian from Virginia whose previous work derived in one way or another from personal experience: his Southern upbringing (*Lie Down in Darkness* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner*), his brief stint in the Marines toward the end of World War II (*The Long March*), and a year spent in Italy after he won the Prix de Rome (*Set This House on Fire*). Yet each of these novels was charged with an apocalyptic sense of evil, and this may perhaps explain Styron's fascination now with the most diabolical events of the century.

Sophie's Choice, more frankly autobiographical than the earlier novels, provides a memoir of the summer of 1947. Styron has recently come to New York from Virginia, "a lean and lonesome young Southerner wandering in the Kingdom of the Jews." Living in a rooming house in Flatbush, he has just embarked on the Faulknerian tale of family damnation that will become *Lie Down in Darkness*, and we are told a great deal about the genesis and composition of the book. Yet as a lifelong captive of historical memory, he is also haunted by the stories of the Turner revolt he has heard since boyhood, and Stingo, as young Styron is called in *Sophie's Choice*, frequently declares that someday he will "write about slavery . . . make slavery give up its most deeply buried and tormented secrets."

Here Styron displays the two sides of his literary imagination in high relief. In the course of his career, he has been strongly attracted to the flamboyant melodrama peculiar to Southern romance, a regional genre awash in the morbidity of ruin, guilt, and decay. He has also been deeply engaged with the actualities of history. The lure of Gothic sensationalism was responsible for his worst book, *Set This House on Fire*, a synthetic *Sturm und Drang* about American expatriates in Italy; but this was followed by *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, whose poignant exploration of the humiliations of slavery and densely textured rendering of the ante-bellum landscape and of plantation life made it his most powerful piece of work. (What infuriated the black nationalists who excoriated *Nat Turner* as a "vile racist myth" was not so much the liberties Styron took with the known facts about the slave leader, but the presumption that any white man could understand the soul of a black slave.) Caught between the inconsonant seductions of Gothic romance and the realities of history, Styron has now tried to resolve this creative dilemma by plunging into the actuality of the death camps.

In *Sophie's Choice*, history assaults the provincial innocence of Stingo by accident. Twenty-two years old in 1947, he is just out of Duke and, fired by familiar dreams of literary glory, has made his way to the big city. But as a junior reader at McGraw-Hill, he finds himself squandering his education and taste on witty rejection letters to tenth-rate authors. Sickened by his sexless isolation in Manhattan, Stingo is soon liberated by a windfall from his father. After moving to Flatbush, he settles down to write that first novel, and is befriended by the woman living above him, Sophie Zawistowska, a survivor of Auschwitz. In the course of the tempestuous summer, the young novelist, "a stranger to love and death," learns about the recent horrors of wartime Europe.

Sophie is a Polish Catholic whose golden beauty captivates Stingo, though he is struck by a strange quality of her body, "the sickish plasticity . . . of one who has suffered severe emaciation and whose flesh is even now in the last stages of being restored." In the deceptive tranquility of Brooklyn, Sophie slowly unfolds her terrible story to Stingo in bursts of memory expelled like poison from her soul: her father and husband shot by the Nazis in Sachsenhausen, even though they were rabid anti-Semites who worshipped Hitler; her craven refusal to help her friends in the Warsaw resistance for fear that it would endanger her children's safety; her arrest when she was caught smuggling meat to her dying mother; the journey to Auschwitz, and the loss of her two young children there.

The ravaged woman remains a prisoner of her past. As with many survivors, guilt at being alive has reduced her to a victim yearning for punishment, and this she finds in masochistic abundance through her Jewish lover, Nathan Landau, a brilliant but violently mercurial intellectual who enters her life as a savior only to become her doom. A

Pearl K. Bell *is our regular fiction critic.*

* Random House, 515 pp., $12.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harvard-educated research biologist who claims to be within sight of cures for cancer and polio, Nathan is a polymath who can range with miraculous ease over the world's body of knowledge, "as brilliant on Dreiser as he was on Whitehead's philosophy." To the bedazzled Stingo he is "the embodiment of everything I deemed attractive and even envied in a human being."

Styron the novelist is enthralled by men like Landau—glittering charmers who cast a rapturous spell—and there is a decadent version of this same sinister enchanter, Mason Flagg, in *Set This House on Fire*. But Nathan, at one moment generous, loving, high-spirited, erudite, funny (this last we must take on faith; Styron tells us about the comic genius but fails to show it), can without warning turn into a snarling fiend, raging at Sophie for imagined infidelities and at Stingo for his incurable Southern racism. Only toward the end do we learn that Nathan's bewildering fluctuations of mood are in fact psychotic, that his beguiling façade is a crazy pack of lies—he has never been to Harvard, he is not a research biologist—and that he has been in and out of mental hospitals most of his life. Despite this explanation, however, Nathan never develops into a credible human being, for Styron paints him in such garish shades of genius and bestiality that, mad though he may be, he is deprived of plausibility. No matter, for his role in the story is primarily instrumental. It is not Nathan's operatic madness but Sophie's slavish devotion that absorbs us, and she is the passionate heart of the book.

WITH a sure instinct, Styron has written Sophie's story in the grand manner of 19th-century fiction—she is, indeed, one of the very few women in contemporary American fiction to possess something of the tragic stature and self-defeating complexity of such classic heroines as Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and Hardy's Sue Bridehead. A victim of absolute evil, she is not simply a pathetic survivor trembling before the lash of fate. She is lover, liar, masochist, drunk—a martyr but not a saint. Despite the cowardice and deception she divulges to Stingo, it is impossible not to be touched by the nobility of this lovable woman devoured by self-loathing. Even when she summons up the courage to tell her young friend, with self-flagellating candor, about her pretense of anti-Semitism when making a futile attempt to seduce Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz, while working as his secretary, we cannot bring ourselves to condemn Sophie. The cruel secret hidden in the title is withheld until almost the last, and it is the darkest reason of all for Sophie's suppurating guilt. In Sophie Zawistowska, Styron has achieved an intensity of feeling and pain that is admirably unsentimental, and he forces us to see that her sins deserve, beyond pity, the generosity of forgiveness.

Sophie's Choice, however, deals not only with this fragile survivor of Nazi barbarism. It is also an account of William Styron's young manhood, and clearly one of his motives for placing Sophie's life in the context of his own, though they are so disparate, is to play on that recurrent theme of American fiction, the contrast of New World innocence and European experience. If in Henry James this encounter brings about alterations of manners and morals, in *Sophie's Choice* it acquires the extremity of nightmare. Listening to Sophie, Stingo is shattered by the realization that while millions were being massacred in Europe, the rest of the world, oblivious, went on with its ordinary business. Stingo feels he can never come to terms with the fact that on the very day Sophie arrived in Auschwitz, he was stuffing himself with bananas in North Carolina to meet the weight requirement of the Marine Corps.

But it is a question whether the collision of innocence and experience requires the profuse indulgence of Styron's portrait of the artist as a young man. There is too much in this novel about Stingo's frustrated efforts to unburden himself of his pent-up virginity. Except for the lyrical celebration of Prospect Park in high summer and a funny account of his failure to conquer an impregnable fortress named Leslie Lapidus, Stingo's horny preoccupations are prolix and faintly embarrassing.

At the end of the novel, Stingo vows that "Someday I will write about Sophie's life and death, and thereby help demonstrate how absolute evil is never extinguished from the world," and Styron has tried to honor this vow in *Sophie's Choice*. On one level it is an extraordinary act of the novelist's imagination, which recreates Sophie's ordeal in Auschwitz and beyond through a wealth of immediate, dramatic detail. We see the "bluish veil of burning human flesh" that darkened the sunlight in the camp; we see and are repelled by Höss taking a break from his murderous duties to gaze lovingly out the window at his Arabian horse. Or, in an appalling episode, Sophie, haggard and defenseless during her first weeks in New York, is crushed in a rush-hour subway train and, when the lights go out, raped by an anonymous marauding finger.

BUT Styron does not limit his scrutiny of evil to these devastating obscenities. He has a moral to spell out. He has read widely and conscientiously in the literature of the Holocaust—not only such detailed chronicles as those of David Rousset, Tadeusz Borowski, Eugen Kogon, André Schwarz-Bart, but also the theoretical efforts of Hannah Arendt, George Steiner, and the Jewish theologian Richard Rubenstein—and he means to wrest some lesson from the slaughter. Styron has been particularly impressed by Rubenstein's thesis, in *The Cunning of History*, that the concentration camps were not only "places of execution" but a new kind of slave society—"a world of the living dead"—based on ruthless domination and "the absolute *expendability* of human life."

Midway through *Sophie's Choice*, then, Styron abruptly and for a long moment exchanges the voice of the novelist for that of the moralist. What especially troubles him is the fact that the world is, to this day, largely unmindful of the millions of non-Jewish Russians, Serbs, Gypsies, Slovenes, and Poles like Sophie who died alongside the Jews. It disturbs him that "It is surpassingly difficult for many Jews to see beyond the consecrated nature of the Nazis' genocidal fury." Though Styron allows that such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parochialism is understandable, in his view it reveals a deficiency of moral responsibility and a dangerous insensitivity to those forces in contemporary life that might spawn new Holocausts. In a recent interview, he has even questioned the validity of the word Holocaust, as Jews have defined it for more than a decade, and argues that the French term *l'univers concentrationnaire* more accurately describes "the significance of this intolerable crime."

IN ONE sense, given his revulsion at the radical evil of the Nazis, Styron may be right. But what he misses is that, precisely as an expression of radical evil, the Holocaust gained its significance because its first purpose was the total eradication of one people, the Jews—not for anything they had done but only for being who they were. It is this that distinguishes the Jewish victims in the death camps from all others.

Styron also neglects the historical fact that the word Holocaust acquired importance for Jews only twenty years after the defeat of Nazi Germany. What happened between 1940 and 1945 became fully manifest to Jewish consciousness not in the decade after World War II but with the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the third time that the Israelis had to defend their lives, when it became evident that the symbolic and actual history of the people was again being threatened. It was then that the theological meaning of the Holocaust became clear: that, as Emil Fackenheim put it, Hitler should not achieve in death what he failed to do in life.

Styron's insistence on seeing the Holocaust as an example of slavery —if a particularly horrible one—is perhaps to be expected in a Southerner who has devoted a good deal of his mature life to contemplating that institution. Yet by emphasizing not the end goal of the Nazi plan—mass murder—but rather the means of domination and enslavement which they settled on to effectuate that goal, Styron loses a sense of the full enormity of the Holocaust. He is, in any case, too prone to highly charged but dubious generalization: "And were not all of us, white and Negro, still enslaved? I knew that in the fever of my mind and in the most unquiet regions of my heart I would be shackled by slavery as long as I remained a writer." Sentiments like these, intended to enlarge the didactic range of his novel, have, rather, the effect of undermining its dramatic power.

YET it should be stressed that Styron's "philosophy" is, in every way that counts, external to *Sophie's Choice*. Philosophers analyze, classify, and make distinctions of language, but a novel like this one cuts across distinctions because human beings embody within themselves endlessly various motives. The art of the novel is necessarily dramatic, concrete, and idiosyncratic, and it can reveal complex truths about individuals, and their dissonant impulses, in devious and untidy ways. Styron may not be persuasive as a philosophic mind meditating on history, but that does not diminish his genuine strength. So powerfully does the *novelist* bring Sophie to life that she seems less imagined than remembered. As we read her story, we bear witness to her fatality, and it is the word made flesh that remains with us in the end.

Theater

How Not to Do Shakespeare & How Not to Write a Play

Jack Richardson

BY NOW it should be well known that the much-anticipated and short-lived production of *Richard III* with Al Pacino in the title role was something of a disaster. Pacino's interpretation of Richard as a buffoonish Machiavel who leers and cackles at actors and audience alike, who slobbers, spits, twitches, and tugs at his hair in the way nickelodeon villains once twirled mustaches, simply made the play impossible to take seriously. There is, indeed, a great deal of humor in Richard's character, but it is a cold, ironic sort, founded on his unsparing view of himself and the world's pieties. It cannot be mugged or mouthed into existence on the stage without draining Richard of all credibility and making the actions of history in which he is caught seem absurd.

If this production showed that a very gifted actor can misjudge his role and perhaps his abilities, it also presented a perfect case study of how not to do Shakespeare. As often in these pages in the past, I'm going to be forced into making invidious comparisons between our

---

JACK RICHARDSON *is a playwright and critic. His new book,* Memoir of a Gambler, *will be published in the fall by Simon & Schuster.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

actors and those of the English stage, but I would like to say right away that I do not believe Shakespeare to be the exclusive property of one traditional style. To try to force upon his plays the rigid techniques of a single mode of interpretation, no matter how successful it has proven itself, would be foolish, and though there are some critics who would like to see Shakespeare performed in a formalized way, by actors all trained in a single coherent style, I am not one of them.

Still, there must be *some* style, *some* technical point of view imposed on the way Shakespeare is put on the stage. The English have one, and we do not. This is not to say that the English can't perform Shakespeare badly. Anyone who saw the recent television productions of his plays exported by the BBC knows that English acting can be very fallible indeed. But when the English fail, one at least knows how to judge their failure. One can point to an uninspired performance here, a bit of miscasting there, or a wrong-headed notion on the part of the director. American productions, however, have about their failures no such clarity. Since the actors have nothing in common with one another, it is impossible to judge fairly who is doing his job well and to what purpose he is doing it; all seem headed in different directions and to have come from origins peculiar to themselves. Each has a different walk, a different way of handling verse, a different way of managing the swaggers of nobility. Instead of one world, we get dozens of neighborhoods; instead of a play, we get a prodigy of parts. Who can tell why all these bits and pieces of behavior have been gathered together or what made them think they formed a dramatic community? Since they bring no real standards with them, they cannot be judged, only dismissed.

It is often said that the English achieve their Shakespearean coherence at the price of a certain artificiality. By this it is generally meant that their actors speak in a way that has nothing to do with ordinary speech, that instead of acting their parts they present us with exercises in elocution. To this one answers, first of all, that Shakespeare's language may once have been close to the way people talked in court and tavern, but it is no longer so. To deal successfully with it, a special diction has to be created, a verbal style that manages to make cogent sense out of both the meaning and the music of the words. The English have done this by developing a "stage language," a device carefully crafted to suit the problems of speaking poetry and prose which were written four centuries ago for an audience whose habits of speech included accents, rhythms, stresses, and a tempo much different from our own, and whose appetite for metaphor and melody was more hearty and unabashed. We, on the other hand, continue to send our actors off on a collision course with the Elizabethan language. In their effort to avoid sounding highfalutin, they struggle to be natural and to make Shakespeare accommodate himself to all sorts of parochial speech. In the Pacino production, this resulted in an Edward IV who spoke in the bland, orotund manner of a radio announcer; a Duchess of York who delivered her maledictions in the homely style of a sitcom granny; and a murderer who sounded as if he had stepped out of a 1930's movie.

Now, although this particular verbal hodgepodge received a good deal of critical abuse, it was hardly something unique to this production of *Richard III*. Indeed, the problem is present whenever our actors face a Shakespearean text, and although it is often minimized by our critics, it is always a heavy impediment to an imaginative enjoyment of Shakespeare's plays. And it will remain a problem so long as our dramatic schools and repertory companies fail to forge an American stage language that is capable of being taught and developed so that it serves both Shakespeare and a modern sensibility.

THE rest of the production's failures were of the sort that usually occur when there is no single point of view to protect the play from the random attacks of individual insights. The costumes, for example, were a mixture of styles gleaned from four centuries of fashion. Everything from doublets to jackboots, crowns to berets, was on hand to distract one from the action on stage, and if this eclectic tailoring was supposed to enforce the idea of the timelessness of *Richard III*, it was both redundant and simple-minded. The set, a collection of rumbling platforms that moved to no real purpose, seemed created to display the designer's mechanical ingenuity rather than to support the needs of the action. The direction, by David Wheeler, the artistic head of the Theater Company of Boston and an instructor in the School of Theater Arts at Boston University, was both aimless and injurious. Even if one disagrees with Pacino's low comic handling of Richard, it could have compelled at least some sympathetic curiosity had the rest of the production been shaped to accommodate it. As it was, Wheeler allowed the other members of the cast to go about their business in a traditional manner, so that in effect two plays were on at the same time. If was as if no one were meant to see what Richard was doing except the audience, and the result was to make Pacino seem more grotesque and antic than he would have if his fellow actors had responded to him in kind.

All in all, then, *Richard III* was, as everyone said, a shabby, dismal thing. But to show that something can be salvaged even from a theatrical wreck, let me end on the play's one enjoyable and legitimate moment. It was provided by Max Wright in the hardly pivotal role of the Second Murderer in the scene in which Richard's brother, Clarence, is dispatched. Now the Second Murderer is a man whom financial need has caused to enter the wrong profession. He is an assassin with a conscience, and as Wright played him, he is an admirable balance of fear and need, of practical judgments and moral sense. He was the only one on stage who seemed to be aware of the murder and mayhem going on around him and to have thought out how a human being might behave in such circumstances.

In a single moment in his scene with Clarence, Wright neatly fleshed out the effects of all the misplaced faith and treachery of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the play. Clarence is begging to be spared, and tells the murderers that if they have been "hired for meed," then they should go to his brother Richard, who he believes still loves him and will therefore outmatch any reward set by the king upon his life. Just as Clarence was about finished, right after mentioning his brother's name, Wright began to interpolate a long "nooo" into the script. This word, wearily brought forth, became a terrible sigh of pity and at the same time a telling comic judgment on Clarence's, and the world's, gullibility. For a brief second, the play came to life, but, alas, since Shakespeare didn't know his Second Murderer would have to carry the weight of the evening, he allowed him to disappear a few lines later.

Loose Ends, the new play by Michael Weller, is something of a mystery to me. I found it a sodden effort, a long, drawn-out, meandering chronicle of two lives that had little, dramatic or otherwise, to recommend them. Yet the play was almost universally praised by the daily reviewers, many of whom found it to contain sharply observed characters very much of our time, and a theatrical strategy on the part of the playwright that was fresh and honest. My only explanation for this general enthusiasm is that sometimes a play can be so bad that it simply beguiles criticism.

Loose Ends begins with Paul and Susan, a young couple in their twenties, lolling on a beach in Bali. The year is 1970, and Paul, having just finished two years in the Peace Corps, is on his way back to the States to take up a job and begin his life. The Peace Corps sojourn had been for him a time of disillusionment, for after building outhouses for an African village, he discovered that its inhabitants had no intention of using them since they employed human excrement as a fertilizer. Deciding on this evidence that the world may be too complex for social remedies, Paul now intends to scale down his idealism to suit the proportions of a personal life. He rejects Susan's offer to go vacationing around the globe, and they part—obviously to meet again.

When they do, it is a year later. They are now lovers, both nervously on the edge of a deeper commitment. Susan wants to move in with Paul, but can't seem to get this through to him. Indeed, they both respect each other's "space" so much that they communicate through intermediaries during most of the play. Finally, they begin to share the same roof, and eventually marry. Paul becomes a film editor, Susan dabbles in photography, and they seem happy enough. But trouble arrives when Susan begins to take her work seriously. She comes to New York, gets a taste of the good life, and no longer wants to be a part of Paul's idealistic private world in which money and prestige are viewed as corruptions of hearth and home. After a brief separation, Paul compromises, comes to New York, and, sustained by the vague promise that he will soon be a father, goes about becoming successful.

Have they found happiness? Not a bit of it. Susan becomes pregnant, sees a baby as a threat to her freedom, and, without telling Paul, has an abortion. Of course, he finds out and the final clash occurs. "Let's talk," Paul says, an ominous sentence that is used throughout the play as a prelude to diffuse bursts of dialogue about the direction and meaning of their lives. They argue, shout, entreat, and pity themselves for about ten frantic minutes, then mercifully decide to put their problem in the hands of a lawyer. A final post-divorce scene takes place in a cabin in New Hampshire. They make love, but do not make amends. Susan leaves Paul to go out on a date, and he sits alone, looking at old slides taken of the two of them in happier days.

IT MAY seem that I have been writing a proposal for a sequence in *As the World Turns*, but this is essentially all that happens in *Loose Ends*. Two characters of very dim mind and spirit are dragged through nine years of uneventful life by a playwright who seems not to know how to distill, select, or heighten action in order to give those years any focus or form. As for the other characters in the play, they are all stock figures, predictable generalizations that the author uses in conventional ways. There is Paul's brother, successful in business and, therefore, boorish, dipsomaniacal, and miserable in his private life; a Vietnam veteran of the hippie school who shuns the cities, builds houses in the New Hampshire woods, and ends up "going straight" and making a fortune in real estate; a crudely satirized guru; a flapping homosexual who, one supposes, stands for a sophisticated New York life; a woman in search of karmas and nirvanas who —oh, irony!—ends up married to a prosaic city planner; another who, to put it charitably, is a child of instinct; and a third who is modern, with-it, together, Oriental, and who serves no purpose in the play except that of a sounding board for the endless woes of Paul and Susan.

THERE are those who see in all this some sort of generational parable. Susan and Paul, children of the high-minded 60's, grow up to find life neither so simple nor so sweet as the songs of Woodstock made it seem. But no matter how hard I try, I simply fail to find anything about this couple that transcends their own self-absorptions and petty, personal details. They talk about nothing but themselves; not a hint of politics or anything else is present to give a broader social context to their lives. There is no *Zeitgeist* tucked away in this play, only a few trendy notions sprinkled through it.

Other enthusiasts of Weller, while admitting that *Loose Ends* is written in a flaccid manner, and that its characters are not very compelling types, nevertheless claim that this dreary effect is achieved because the author does not romanticize his subject. He wants to show us inane, boring people, so he courageously writes an inane, boring play about them. This idea, that treatment and subject should somehow share the same nature, is something only a desperate critic falls back on when he feels obliged to override his honest reaction. A book about child-raising need not be infantile; a theory of acoustics need not be noisy; and a play about stupidity need not be—but I leave it to the reader to tie up the loose ends of this argument.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

From Nixon to Pol Pot

SIDESHOW: KISSINGER, NIXON, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF CAMBODIA. By WILLIAM SHAWCROSS. *Simon & Schuster. 467 pp. $13.95.*

Reviewed by CHARLES HORNER

With the collapse in 1975 of the American effort to preserve non-Communist regimes in Indochina, it became certain that subsequent developments there would come to be measured against previous American attitudes, presumptions, and predictions. Among opponents of the war, there had been two principal arguments. The first was "geopolitical." It held that the war was ill-advised, and represented a misunderstanding both of the strategic issues and the local conditions. It challenged the idea that the Vietnamese Communists were an extension of Chinese imperialism. It contended that Communist confederation in Indochina would prove inherently unstable, unable in the long run to undermine the larger strategic position of the United States in that area of the world.

Those who advanced these propositions may claim vindication if they like. For the American defeat in Vietnam—whatever its adverse psychological and emotional consequences—has not yet had the larger strategic implications some had feared. China and Vietnam have been at war; Vietnam and Cambodia have been at war. The Sino-Soviet conflict has been superimposed on Indochina. The task the United States once took upon itself—"containing" Vietnamese expansion—has now been assumed by China.

The current situation in Indochina does indeed provide "stability" of a sort without direct American involvement, but there is still a cost and a problem. These are symbolized by the "geopolitical" necessity of favoring China/Pol Pot-Cambodia over Soviet Union/Vietnam. It is a moral dilemma of *Realpolitik*. For the Pol Pot regime is more than an embarrassment; it is the most disgusting of this generation. And as the Pol Pot loyalists wage a struggle against an invading Vietnamese army, it is distasteful to offer even tacit support to the "resistance" merely because its own interests happen to coincide with a strategic interest of our own in preserving a "balance in the region."

And yet, within the "realist" case, there was, and is, something more than this. For behind the notion that the effort to create stable non-Communist regimes was doomed lay a more sober, even ruthless, judgment: the American effort at "nation-building" had overestimated the potential for civilization in that part of the world. Communist expansionism would more likely dissolve in the resurgence of local barbarism than it would be smothered in "socialist"—or even capitalist—construction. So it seems for the moment. There is no "hegemony" in Indochina, but there is brutality, chaos, and suffering.

There was a second and different "anti-war" argument, this one based on the proposition that the government of Nguyen Van Thieu had no right to exist. Here, another paradigm was imposed on Indochina. The Communist forces were seen as rebels against a corrupt and repressive political and social order. Their cause was just, their victory—because of their popular following—inevitable. To resist such a legitimate cause was not merely futile but immoral.

Yet even if one chooses to interpret the Communist success in these terms, one comes up against the same cost and the same problem—Cambodia. The "forces of liberation" have treated their Western admirers with contempt. In Vietnam itself, they have institutionalized the practices of Communist totalitarianism. In the worst days of the Thieu repression there were not tens of thousands who risked their lives to flee, even though flight was much easier then. For all his disregard of Western norms, Thieu never even contemplated wholesale expulsion of "undesirables," now the official policy of the "Socialist Republic" of Vietnam. And in Camboda it has been worse, much worse, in every respect. Indeed, the behavior of Cambodian and Vietnamese Communists makes any moral claim ever put forward for them absurd, a humiliation to all those who sustained such a claim over the long years of the Vietnam struggle. Their current appeals to Hanoi to mend its ways are pathetic.

And so for all those who opposed the Vietnam war—for whatever reason and with whatever intensity—Cambodia is a large problem. How did it happen and why? Could it have been anticipated and, if so, averted? And it is no less a problem for the war's supporters, for if *they* can be shown to bear a major responsibility, does this not make them even more deserving of discredit, even more unfit for a continuing role in the political and cultural life of the country?

Sideshow, by the British journalist William Shawcross, has made a conspicuous entry into this discussion. Widely noticed, and well-received, it tells two stories and propounds a theory. The first story is the conduct of United States policy in Cambodia. Here, Shawcross assembles a mass of material—personal interviews, U.S. government documents released to him under the Freedom of Information Act—to recount that policy in action. For Shawcross, Cambodia is "the foreign-policy side of Watergate,"

CHARLES HORNER *is a specialist in international affairs who has written frequently on this subject in* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The measure of greatness.

Bestselling sales are only part of the success story of Herman Wouk's WAR AND REMEMBRANCE. More astonishing than the sheer numbers are the prestige and importance of the novel's most ardent fans—truly a roster of the great:

STATESMEN

"A great book....It will be read by future generations no less than Tolstoy's War and Peace."
—Menachem Begin

"An outstanding novel and at the same time a great work of history."
—Henry Kissinger

MEN OF LETTERS

"For emotional comprehension and intellectual power, by far the best novel I read in 1978."*—C.P. Snow*

"Herman Wouk is one of our finest storytellers, and this novel is his masterpiece."
—William Manchester

MILITARY LEADERS

"A great classic novel....The descriptions of battles and other military activities are vivid, historically accurate, and exciting."
—Admiral Robert B. Carney

HISTORIANS

"Not since Tolstoy has a novelist elevated historical subject matter into such a significant and inspiring form."*—Louis B. Wright*

CONGRESSMEN

"Herman Wouk gets high marks, not only for a superb literary effort but also for accuracy and technical detail."*—G. William Whitehurst*

JOURNALISTS

"The novel of the decade—a book that not only entertains, fascinates and instructs, but makes the reader a better person."*—William Safire*

"No American has come closer to Tolstoy in seeing war and misery with the eye of a great historian and the heart of a great humanist."
—Daniel Schorr

A number-one bestseller on publication, WAR AND REMEMBRANCE has already become a landmark in current American literature. Yet the work is far from the usual bestseller. Over a thousand pages long, rich with true history, it contains some of the most unforgettable scenes in recent fiction. Its range is global, its romantic story complex and tragic. Here are some of the secrets of its powerful appeal:

EMOTIONAL RICHES

"A journey of extraordinary emotional riches....A stirring work of fiction and fact."*—New York Times Book Review*

ACTION

"Wouk brilliantly recreates battles, places and the horrors of the war. ...The scope of it all is Tolstoyan."
—Washington Star

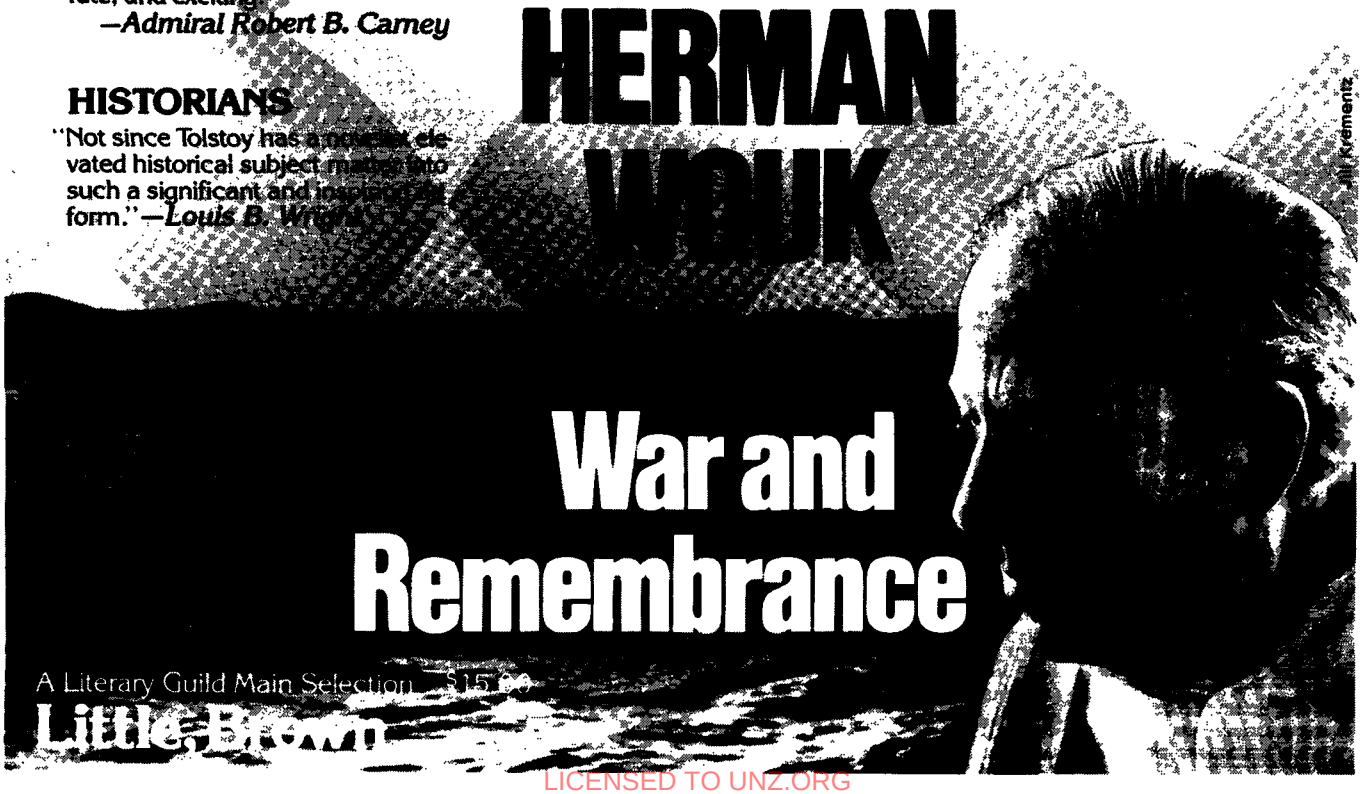
ROMANCE

"El Alamein; Guadalcanal; the OSS; submarine warfare; romance. Yes, even romance. And betrayal. And loyalty....Wouk is a magnificent storyteller."*—Boston Globe*

ENTERTAINMENT

"Splendidly entertaining....You are aboard a submarine that sneaks into Lingayen Gulf and nearly gets sunk. You fly a dive bomber that helps destroy a Japanese aircraft carrier at Midway."
—New York Times

Make this truly a summer to remember with the great American novel, WAR AND REMEMBRANCE.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the two are indeed related. In order to keep secret the extent of U.S. military activity in Cambodia, especially the large-scale bombing of its territory that began in 1969, the Nixon administration came to corrupt the ordinary institutions and practices of the government. At first, this involved keeping the Cambodian operations "off the books"; then, to maintain the secrecy in the face of press leaks, wiretapping was begun. This in turn fed into, was a kind of genesis of, the various extra-institutional and illegal practices which became part of the larger Watergate crisis.

Much of Shawcross's account of this first story turns on details of chronology and individual knowledge. Presumably, Henry Kissinger's memoirs will give him an opportunity to respond to the accusations Shawcross and others have made against him. But however history renders its judgment on individual culpability in these episodes, we already know enough to say that the American effort in Cambodia strained our constitutional system at least to its limit.

WHAT of Shawcross's second story? It has to do with his account of the rise of the Khmer Rouge, whose victory in Cambodia was to produce such stark misery. It is not the main focus of his book at all, but it does enter into it, and certainly hovers over it. Shawcross is no apologist for the Pol Pot regime. He has written of its brutalities in this volume and elsewhere, and he has been criticized for so doing. But as much as he condemns the Khmer Rouge, the real moral intensity of his writing is directed against Americans; if Nixon and Kissinger had not done what they did, Pol Pot and his associates would not have been able to do what they did. For, in Shawcross's view, the carrying of the war into Cambodia—*even if*, presumably, the Nixon administration had done it in scrupulous observance of American law and tradition—served only to spread the fighting, to deprive Cambodia of a genuinely unifying and popular force in Prince Sihanouk, to install in his stead a decrepit Lon Nol, to destroy the rural order, to flood the cities with refugees, in short to create the conditions for the rise of Pol Pot.

And all this, Shawcross implies, could have been more or less anticipated, based on the prior American experience in South Vietnam, where the application of substantial military force had not broken Communist power.

The argument is not wholly convincing, on several counts. In the first place, it affords a tacit legitimacy to what the North Vietnamese were doing in South Vietnam and in Cambodia, which was—and this seems incontrovertible now—invading both places, while it affords no legitimacy whatsoever to efforts to resist what the North Vietnamese were doing. Secondly, in appearing to ascribe the primary moral responsiblity for recent Cambodian history to Nixon and Kissinger, Shawcross loses a sense of proportion. It is one thing to "create conditions" which give rise to a government of mass murderers, quite another to do the murdering. Shawcross posits a tragic inevitability where none really exists. No one forced Pol Pot to behave the way he did; what he did, he did because he wanted to do it. Even if one chooses to accept every harsh judgment that Shawcross pronounces upon Nixon and Kissinger—that they were arrogant, corrupt, deceitful, even criminal in some sense according to both American and international law—they hardly partake of the absolute degeneracy of Pol Pot.

More disturbing is that in this book the behavior of the United States does not become the basis for attacking the brutalities of Communist power, but rather, in a remarkable *tour de force*, acts of Communist brutality become the basis for attacking the United States. It is as if Shawcross were seeking to construct the final *reductio ad absurdum* of efforts to resist the expansion of Communist power in the world: we say we resist such expansion because the Communists are brutal, whereas many of these brutalities, especially in Southeast Asia, derive from our very attempts at resistance. We create Communism by trying to destroy it.

For Shawcross, this is more than a poignant paradox; rather, it seems central to his understanding of the United States as a force in the world. Even the very evils of Communism—as soon as they are adequately verified so that denials of them become futile—can thus enter into a critique of the United States. This is a new and important contribution to the theory and practice of anti-Americanism. The brutalities in Cambodia are to be blamed, in the main, not on the Cambodians, or the Vietnamese, or the Chinese, or the Russians, but on the Americans.

To appreciate the originality of this description of the American role in Cambodia, it is helpful to recall the 1970 "incursion" itself. It was widely opposed, and it ended shortly as a result of congressional action. Here, too, as with the war itself, there were two kinds of opposition. Those who felt the war was strategically and politically wrong feared its expansion, feared the enlargement of the "quagmire." But those who felt the war was wrong because we were on the "wrong side of history" opposed the Cambodian operation from a different perspective. They did not argue that it would lead to a brutal Communist regime. Rather, they opposed it precisely because they half-believed, and therefore feared, the claims that were being put forward in its behalf, especially the claim that it might indeed so damage the Communist forces that the Thieu regime would survive. If, in the Cambodian "incursion," there was even the remotest possibility that years of American effort in Vietnam would be redeemed, then that "incursion" had to be opposed in the strongest terms.

Of course there was no such possibility. If Nixon and Kissinger had thought sufficient support existed in the country at large for military operations in Cambodia, they would not have gone through such great efforts to maintain secrecy. But if they believed that their policy, once openly revealed and subject to *de facto* congressional veto, could not be sustained, why did they initiate it in the first place? Was it better to have fought and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some recent books from REGNERY GATEWAY, INC. BOOK PUBLISHERS

IN DEFENSE OF DECADENT EUROPE

Raymond Aron

Called by Henry Kissinger "one of the most important intellectual statements of our time," Raymond Aron's latest work examines the political, economic, sociological, and intellectual disparities between the free societies of the West and the Communist countries. "The book's comprehensive mastery of detail and its forceful polemics recall the author's earlier classic, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*. Recommended."
—*Library Journal*. $14.95

NOTES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF NIGHT

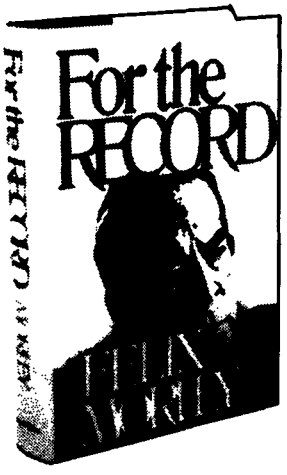
Juliana Geran Pilon

An exceptionally moving diary-memoir of the author's recent visit to her native Romania. It abounds with bitter-sweet flashbacks to a childhood filled with familial love and bureaucratic terror. "Pilon writes beautifully and evocatively of past and present; her voice, her story, rings clear and true."
—*Publishers Weekly*. $8.95

FOR THE RECORD

Felix Morley

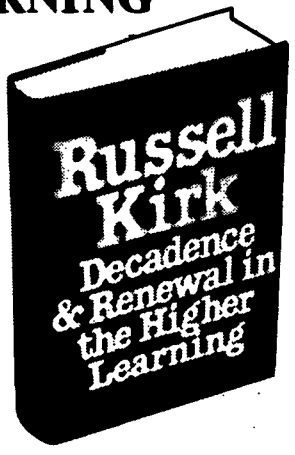
Memoirs of a major figure in American journalism during the half-century since World War I. "It was a useful life altogether, in which everything that came his way was turned to good account."
—*The Kirkus Reviews*.
$15.00



DECADENCE AND RENEWAL IN THE HIGHER LEARNING

Russell Kirk

A penetrating look at American higher education as it has developed and decayed over the last quarter-century. "With anecdotes, wit, and the testimony of other scholars, Kirk turns what might have been a dreary tale into an absorbing, episodic history."
—*American Bar Association Journal*.
$15.00



Four additional books

THOMAS MANN: the Ironic German by Erich Heller. "This is the best book written about Thomas Mann."—Stephen Spender. Quality paperback: $4.45

GABRIEL MARCEL by Seymour Cain. A useful guide to the foremost Christian existentialist of this century. Quality paperback: $3.95

THE ORIGIN OF SCIENCE AND THE SCIENCE OF ITS ORIGIN by Stanley L. Jaki. A collection of five hitherto unpublished lectures delivered by the author at Oxford University in 1977. $8.95

THE REVENGE FOR LOVE by Wyndham Lewis. An utterly devastating attack on the empty pretentiousness of the left-wing intellectual milieu of the Thirties. Perhaps Lewis's finest novel. Quality paperback: $4.25

For a Complete Catalog write

REGNERY/GATEWAY, INC.
Box 207, South Bend, Indiana 46624

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lost than not to have fought at all? Whichever, the shock to the American polity was profound, and political behavior on all sides was affected. But then, that was a time when disputants justified their actions by appeal to a "higher law"—as in the case of civil disobedience—or by reference to bizarre doctrines of "inherent power" to bend the Constitution—as in the case of the administration's actions. People seemed uninterested in what was legal, interested only in what they thought to be "right."

Shawcross's book reveals yet another paradox about our current views of the Vietnam experience. It is the domestic political correlative of what diplomatic history calls a reversal of alliances. For if *Sideshow*, for its part, quite straightforwardly seizes upon recent Cambodian history as a way of further discrediting the recent history of the United States, one might have thought others would learn something different from present-day Cambodia, something which would offer not defamation, but praise, for the United States. But this has not happened. Vietnam is no longer to be argued about. Everyone now chooses to remember himself in opposition to the war. Even some of whose who helped direct it—including the present Secretaries of State and Defense—survived their involvement with enhanced honor and even higher rank. They are hardly likely, now, to seize upon Cambodia as a kind of absolution for their earlier positions. It is past time; where was the "bloodbath" when they really needed it?

Nor is this the only transposition. Among those who today find Secretary of State Vance too "soft" in the conduct of American foreign policy are some who once found too "hard" the policy he helped implement as Deputy Secretary of Defense. Such critics are today stalwart defenders of America and what it represents; they view Secretary Vance otherwise. But just as Mr. Vance is reluctant to embrace Cambodia to vindicate himself as he was a dozen years ago, so his contemporary critics refuse to embrace Cambodia to rebuke themselves as they were a dozen years ago. It is exquisite; Mr. Vance cannot concede that he was right, his critics cannot concede that they were wrong.

THERE are at least two groups who know more about this than any of us. The first are the refugees of Indochina, whose misery beggars description. To them we are doing our humane duty, but we speak to them only in the vocabulary of "refugee assistance," not of politics, not with real meaning. To the other refugees of the Vietnam war, those wandering in our own midst—the 2,769,000 men who served in Vietnam—we speak in an equally constricted vocabulary, stopping at a discussion of "veterans' benefits." No one will say to them that we are proud of what they tried to do, of what they were sent to do. No one will say to them that if they had prevailed, maybe, just maybe, what has happened in Indochina these past four years might not have happened. Until someone says it, their history, when it comes to be written, might just as easily be entitled *Sideshow*.

Meanwhile, Shawcross will go unchallenged in his passions and pieties. And the courage, honor, and humanity of our soldiers will remain a pretext for slandering them, their dead and wounded comrades, and the values and interests they defended.

Spokesman?

BEING JEWISH IN AMERICA. By ARTHUR HERTZBERG. *Schocken. 287 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by JULIUS WEINBERG

THE commitment of American Jews to liberal reform became something of a political axiom in the two decades after World War II. Two assumptions in particular brought Jews into the liberal camp and kept them there in large numbers: the assumption that, at home, the Democratic successors to Franklin D. Roosevelt would continue to adhere to the norms of equal opportunity established by the New Deal in order to improve the quality of life for all Americans, and the assumption that, in foreign affairs, American military might and the policy of "containment" initiated by Truman and implemented by his Democratic successors would continue to provide a measure of protection from the Soviet Union for non-Communist nations in the world—including the state of Israel.

By the early 70's, in the minds of many Jews, liberal ideology and practice, both at home and abroad, had taken an alarming turn. In domestic matters, the semantic euphemisms of "community control" and "affirmative action" were being used as covers for policies that bid fair to destroy the meritocratic norms—and, in some instances, the very institutions—through which the descendants of immigrants had made their way in American society in the immediate post-World War II era. In foreign policy, many American Jews were becoming concerned over the post-Vietnam drift toward isolationism in important segments of the liberal community and, finally, in the Carter administration, a drift which has led our allies in Europe and elsewhere to question America's resolve and capability to lead and defend the non-Communist world.

It is in this context of a growing disillusionment within the Jewish community with the practices of the "new liberalism"—both at home and abroad—that one should view *Being Jewish in America*, a collection of essays and lectures written and delivered over the past quarter-century by Arthur Hertzberg, a noted rabbi, scholar, and former president of the American Jewish Congress. For Hertzberg is, somewhat surprisingly, a propagator of the "new liberalism," albeit one whose Jewish roots are deep, and whose command of Jewish materials and modern history is impressive. As the author of a monograph on anti-Semitism in the French Enlightenment and the editor of an anthology of Zionist thought, Hertzberg writes with familiarity about the European tradition of hatred of Jews, and with perception about the ideological, institutional, and programmatic aspects

JULIUS WEINBERG *is professor of history at Cleveland State University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of both Zionism and the relationship between the state of Israel and the Diaspora. *Being Jewish in America* is the product of a lively and an inquisitive mind; the author is keenly aware of the ironies and paradoxes—and the spiritual void—brought on by the encounter of many Jews with modernity. In the tradition of the Galician *Haskalah* that he appears to identify with, and following his Conservative mentors at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Hertzberg's writings articulate a search for a redefinition, largely in sociological and historical terms, of "the peoplehood of the Jews" in the modern age.

Included in *Being Jewish in America* is Hertzberg's prescient essay—first published in 1966—on the declining influence of the rabbinate in American Jewish life. Although retracted in part by Hertzberg in a subsequent assessment, his principal thesis remains a valid one: there has been a marked decline in the status of the rabbi in recent decades, particularly evident in the scarcity of men such as Stephen Wise, Abba Hillel Silver, and other singularly gifted pulpiteers who set much of the tone and the agenda for the Jewish community prior to and during World War II.

Another exceptional essay concerns the meaning of the Holocaust. Cutting through the self-serving piety that suffuses much of the literature on this subject, Hertzberg writes from the perspective of one who escaped the Holocaust because his parents exercised the option of their American visa in the very last week of the year it was due to expire, 1926. He is critical of those who would subsume the Holocaust under the emotional rubric of "pride"—as in Janusz Korczak's decision to go to the crematorium with the children of the orphan home he headed; of "shame"—Europe's Jews, Hertzberg acerbically notes, had no duty to uphold a sense of honor in the Western sense, their own, or ours; or of "guilt," for not having been there or for having survived. In place of these emotions, Hertzberg responds to the murder of Europe's Jews with anger, "anger at the world which let the Holocaust

Untouchable

An Indian Life History

JAMES M. FREEMAN

MULI is one of India's 100,000,000 untouchables: desperately poor, a victim of brutal discrimination and exploitation, and with little hope of improving his condition. This fascinating document is his autobiography, as told to an American anthropologist. A masterful storyteller and a perceptive observer of his social surroundings, Muli describes with ironic and occasionally amused detachment what it is like to be at the bottom of Indian life, and what happens when an untouchable attempts to break out of his accepted role. Combined with Professor Freeman's analysis and commentary, Muli's story adds a new dimension to our understanding of life within one of the world's most oppressed groups. Illustrated. $18.95

STANFORD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

happen . . . at the Western tradition with its pretense of civility and the rotten endemic reality of its Jew-hatred," and at himself for being so young when it all happened and, hence, so silent.

THE dialectical qualities of Hertzberg's thought are clearly evident in his essays on Zionism and on the relation between Israel and the Diaspora. He recognizes that the enfranchisement process of the post-World War II decades made possible the bold response by American Jews to the Israeli crisis of June 1967, yet he fears that this very sense of at-homeness may ultimately erode the depth of American Jewry's commitments to Israel in the future. A paradoxical relationship obtains between Israel and the Diaspora: Israel looks to the Diaspora for its "survivalist energies," and the Diaspora looks to an involvement in Israel for its own continuing vitality. And while this internal drama is taking place, ironies of a deeper kind are also to be noted. Rather than quelling worldwide anti-Semitism, as classical Zionism presumed it would, Israel seems to be generating new forms of it, and this in turn places new strains on Israel-Diaspora relations.

For Hertzberg, the symbiosis between American Jewry and the state of Israel cannot be defended any longer in terms of the dictum formulated by Louis D. Brandeis earlier in the century, that to be a good Zionist is to be a good American. Hertzberg posits the notion that Jewish "peoplehood" is of a different order and "that it ought to be possible . . . to suggest to America and to the world that . . . asymmetrical identities, identities which are not species of the same genus, identities which don't operate in the same way, . . . nonetheless . . . have a right to exist." He argues for a degree of exceptionalism, both for Israel and for American Jewry, that goes against not only classical Zionist conceptions but present-day realities as well. In the case of American Jewry, Hertzberg proposes that the Jewish community of this country should have an equal voice in the political decisions to be made by the state of Israel—including Israel's foreign policy—on the grounds that "Israel lives on behalf of and through world Jewry as surely as it does for itself. . . ."

This kind of political parity between Israel and the Diaspora is of course an impossibility. While the two communities share much and owe much to each other, the crucial decisions—the decisions of war and peace—will be made, for better or for worse, by the community that possesses national sovereignty. To seek to resolve the tension that inheres in the commitment of the American Jew to the survival of Israel by declaring that "Israel is not a state among the states, and . . . the American Jewish Diaspora is unabashedly a group not analogous to any other" is to posit a definition of Zionism that defeats the relationship between these two communities.

HERTZBERG's efforts to redefine the Zionist experience, and particularly the relationship between the Jews of America and of Israel, seem to bespeak a new attitude on his part toward the Jews in general. They are, it appears, no longer to be trusted to know what is in their own best interests, but are in need of enlightened mentors to guide their ideas and actions. Hence his urging upon the state of Israel the good offices of American Jewry—i.e., of certain American Jewish leaders. Hence, too, his urging upon American Jews the program of the "new liberalism." Outlining his position on the major issues confronting American Jewry in the introduction to this volume, Hertzberg exchanges reason for an ideological temper tantrum against those who do not share his views. What emerges is a father-knows-best prescription that incongruously combines the optimism of Stephen Wise's interwar progressivism, the "new politics" of the 70's, and the *Realpolitik* of Henry Kissinger. With much ill temper—and with much moral superiority, in contrast to the dulcet tones of his "Letter to an Arab Friend" (1978)—Hertzberg denounces both the Old Left of the 30's and the "new conservatism" of the 70's and then draws a causal, and invidious, connection between the two.

There are inconsistencies and contradictions here. In a revision of his earlier views, Hertzberg suggests that Jews should abandon the public schools for an "elite" form of "private [Jewish] schooling," but fails to note that the decimation of public education over the last decade is in a significant degree the result of the "new liberalism" he now preaches. Having come out against affirmative-action programs in 1973, Hertzberg finds that he favors them in 1978, unearthing an ideological pretext for this "advanced" position in the Zionist thought of Vladimir Jabotinsky. As a spokesman for the interests of Jews, Hertzberg can appear to be little concerned with their immediate problems. He attacks those who opposed the building of low-income housing in the Jewish community of Forest Hills, Queens, or who argue against quotas in job training, but the fact is—as Hertzberg himself notes elsewhere in this volume—that the victims of the programs of the "new liberals" are still making their way out of the proletariat.

In his introductory polemic, Hertzberg is also critical of the Jewish community for rejecting "the good offices" of Kissinger and Nixon when it came to dealing with the Soviet Union, and for supporting the Jackson-Vanik amendment that tied Soviet trade with the United States to the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union. He criticizes Israel for failing to come to some "agreement" with its Arab neighbors prior to the Yom Kippur War of 1973. "Accommodations were possible," he asserts, "at political prices that reasonable men ought to be willing to pay."

IN SHORT, in both domestic and foreign policy, the man who portrays himself as a distinguished spokesman of the Zionist cause, the central tenet of which is self-determination—the need for Jews to take responsibility for their own destiny—now advises the Jewish community to accept at face value the promises made to it by men in high places. In the context of Hertzberg's "new liberalism," similarly, it is Israel rather than the Arab countries surrounding it that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has to prove its benign intentions to the world. The new Hertzberg takes a more sanguine view of the intentions of the enemies of the United States and of world Jewry than the Hertzberg of yesteryear would have permitted himself. Why? Surely not on the basis of the evidence, all of which would seem to point in the other direction. Whatever the cause for Hertzberg's about-face, it is an exceedingly strange—and disappointing—posture for a survivalist Jew to have assumed.

New York in Crisis

THE STREETS WERE PAVED WITH GOLD. By KEN AULETTA. *Random House. 344 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES RING ADAMS

To reporters covering the New York City fiscal crisis, it was at first the most significant story in the country. Then as the thing dragged on, it seemed to recede into parochialism. Now, however, even though the city is presenting an illusion of progress and the more pessimistic criticism has been relegated to the back pages, there are signs that the experience has had a lasting national impact. The consequences of New York City's heavy public spending have legitimated the wave of fiscal conservatism expressed in Proposition 13, and local officials across the country have been making their own studies of the cause of the debacle.

Ken Auletta's book should be a big help in this process. A former campaign director and city administrator, and now a newspaper and television commentator, Auletta brings more experience and depth to his city reporting than anyone else in the field. His clearly written and clear-headed book is almost (but not quite) the definitive study of the subject.

Not that there is much serious competition. One miserable book has appeared on the first year of the crisis (*The Year the Big Apple Went Bust*, by Fred Ferretti). Jack Newfield and Paul duBrul have done a purported exposé (*The Abuse of Power*) which is interesting mainly as an apology for the opinions and policies that brought New York to its knees. Important fragments of the story can be found in William Simon's overstated memoir, *A Time for Truth*, and, suprisingly, in the New Left anthology, *The Fiscal Crisis of American Cities* (edited by Roger E. Alcaly and David Mermelstein). But Auletta is the first to string together the whole sequence, from Mayor Robert Wagner in the early 60's to Mayor Edward I. Koch in early 1978.

His account is remarkably untainted by apologetics for New York. He examines fully the external causes that city officials have sought to blame for the crisis. The list is familiar—federal highways and mortgages opening up the suburbs, the in-migration of poor blacks and Puerto Ricans, white middle-class out-migration, city contributions to federal and state welfare programs, and so forth. Yet except for one or two lingering bows in the direction of local mythology, Auletta avoids the trap of blaming large, impersonal forces. The debacle, rather, grew from the specific policies of specific politicians.

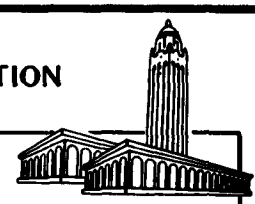
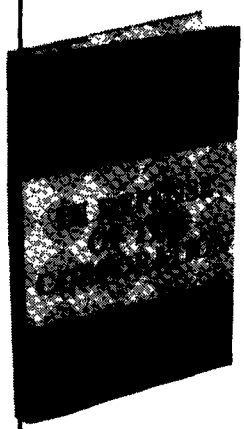
The list of figures who must be called to account is a long one (and it includes Ken Auletta himself, who allowed Off-Track Betting revenues to be overestimated when he was executive director of that agency). But it is also a finite list, and an instructive one. Mayors Wagner, Lindsay, and Beame; City Comptrollers Beame and Goldin; Governors Rockefeller and Wilson; and majorities of the state legislature passed the laws and engaged in the juggling of accounts that allowed the city to run in the red for over a decade, accumulating a hidden deficit of $3.5 to $8 billion at the time of the 1975 crash. This figure represents fiscal realities ignored and political decisions deferred at a cost to taxpayers in unnecessary interest of more than $4 billion.

The municipal unions made sel-

JAMES RING ADAMS, *a writer for the editorial page of the* Wall Street Journal, *has covered the New York City fiscal crisis for some time. His article, "Why New York Went Broke," appeared in the May 1976* COMMENTARY.

Le Moal
942 Third Avenue
(Between 56 & 57 St.)
New York, N.Y. 10022 MU 8 8860

YIVO Institute
for Jewish Research
invites applicants for the position of
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
YIVO is engaged in research, teaching, publication and other scholarly and public programs concerning the Yiddish and East European Jewish cultural heritage and its derivatives in America.
Resumes should include a statement of the applicant's administrative and fund-raising experience.
Salary negotiable. Send applications, including resume, to Morris Laub, Chairman, 1048 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10028.

HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS


Robert Hessen
152 pages
$7.95 cloth
William E. Simon
This book should be required reading for everyone in the business community—indeed, for every thoughtful citizen.
HOOVER INSTITUTION—Dept. A7904
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fish and unreasonable demands, abusing their excessive political power. (But it is not their fault that the politicians caved in so easily.) The financial community, including the much-maligned banks, let the borrowing go on too long, for love of profit and fear of reprisals. The press missed the story, through laziness and inexperience, until well after the point of no return.

The blame for the origin of the crisis has been well assigned by Auletta and ought to be accepted with contrition. But Auletta pushes beyond this ancient history with a detailed and damaging critique of the city's failure to mend its ways. Mayor Lindsay's arrogance let things get out of hand, while Mayor Beame's incompetence frustrated the manful attempts of others to regain control. The city informally adopted a policy of "backloading," postponing severe budget cuts until the end of its first three-year recovery plan in the hope that a Democrat would be in the White House and come to its rescue. One of the bright new financial people imported during the crisis confessed later that the Budget Bureau had prepared many more cutbacks than were adopted. But these imports, men like Deputy Mayors John Zuccotti, Donald Kummerfeld, and Kenneth Axelson, must likewise share the blame. They publicly accepted a "productivity" policy that had the effect of channeling almost every penny saved through layoffs and management reform into pay raises for municipal workers. As a result, the city trimmed its workforce by 20 per cent (mainly through attrition) but saved only 1 per cent in personnel costs.

Auletta's book takes us through the first six months of Edward Koch's mayoralty. The major event of this period was the biennial negotiation over municipal labor contracts. Mayor Koch entered the talks with a list of 61 "give-backs," money-saving changes in work rules, and eliminations of minor fringe benefits he hoped to obtain from the unions, such as the elimination of a uniform allowance for city employees who do not wear uniforms. At the end of the talks, he had gained not a single one. As Auletta completed his book, the fear was spreading that after eight years of arrogance and four years of incompetence, the city might now have at least four years of well-intentioned ineffectuality. Talk of bankruptcy had revived and is well represented in the final chapter.

SINCE THE book was published, the public mood has changed dramatically. Congress passed a loan-guarantee program and, after delays stretching well into the fall of 1978, the city began to receive fresh revenue from borrowing. (Ironically, in an unsuccessful attempt to wrap up this financing package in June, Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal and Senator William Proxmire put pressure on Mayor Koch for an early labor settlement that considerably weakened his hand with the unions.) Then the city issued a fiscal 1980 budget that it claimed was not only "balanced" but "in surplus." Is Ken Auletta's book, then, already outdated? Hardly; his conclusions hold up well in spite of the current euphoria and in fact are the more important because of it.

The political culture of New York has returned full circle to the atmosphere described at the beginning of Auletta's narrative. The new budget depends largely on federal and state aid and can be called "balanced" only by the special definition of state law. It contains a real deficit of $494 million, using the notorious gimmicks of capital-budget borrowing for expense items and delaying pension contributions. This highly-touted budget document includes a table showing that if things continue at their current rate, even including the current level of economizing, the budget for fiscal 1982, the federal deadline for true balance, will run a deficit of $814 million. A later document gives a slightly more realistic estimate of $1.3 billion.

One wonders in frustration and disbelief how history can so quickly repeat itself. The value of Auletta's book is that he attempts to explain; but the explanation is less than fully satisfying. Auletta has most of the parts in the puzzle—the powerful special interests, such as the municipal unions, who also happen to be major creditors; the cozy relations between city officials and their supposed overseers in the state, the financial community, and the federal government; above all, the short-sighted politics—but he has not quite put them together.

At one point, Auletta makes a suggestive reference to the late Alexander Bickel's book, *The Morality of Consent*. This reference first appeared in a column by Auletta in *New York* magazine, where he argued, following Bickel, that New York fell into its crisis because officials, city and state, felt that they knew better what was good for the public than did the public itself, and therefore had the right to evade the restraints imposed by that supreme expression of the public will, the Constitution. So, with the help of John Mitchell, Nelson Rockefeller pioneered the "moral obligation" bond to get around the state constitutional requirement for voter approval of bond issues, and city officials invented a dazzling variety of gimmicks to get around the requirement of a balanced budget.

This point, once so clearly grasped by Auletta, has become fuzzy in the book, probably because Auletta cannot bring himself to absolve the voting public from blame. He quotes George Bernard Shaw: "Democracy is a device that insures we shall be governed by no better than we deserve." Yet in the case of New York, this judgment may be too harsh. There is considerable evidence that the city's fiscal excesses have run contrary to the public will. Voting returns for a new city charter in November 1975 showed more than 60-per-cent approval for budgeting and fiscal provisions expressing a stringent fiscal conservatism, despite opposition to these provisions on the part of City Hall. Similarly, in 1977, Edward Koch emerged from the rear of the pack in the mayoralty campaign because he seemed the one most likely to impose austerity and face down the unions. The fault, then, lies not so much in the public will as in a state political system designed to frustrate it.

Auletta might not wish to acknowledge it, but his book makes a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

very strong case for Howard Jarvis. California's Proposition 13 was a crude and poorly thought-out device, but it did get results. A thoroughly frightened state legislature subsequently voted a further billion-dollar reduction in state income taxes and is now debating a constitutional limit on state spending. Not coincidentally, the May unemployment rate in Los Angeles County was 4.8 per cent, the lowest since the state began keeping local records five years ago.

As for New York, state and city officials publicly accept the principle that reduced taxes and lower public-sector spending are necessary for a strong private sector, but their attempts to implement this principle have been painfully fitful. As long as New York City continues to suffer the political paralysis Ken Auletta so indignantly describes, the best it can hope for is continued economic stagnation, while the rest of the country continues to watch and learn from the experience.

Killing & the State

FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: CRIME AND THE MORALITY OF THE DEATH PENALTY. By WALTER BERNS. *Basic Books. 214 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by PETER L. BERGER

IN THE case of this book, the title and subtitle give, for once, an accurate idea of the contents. The book is a frank plea in favor of capital punishment. The argument places the issue in the general context of public attitudes toward crime and criminals, and is made finally on moral rather than on practical grounds. Walter Berns (a professor of political science at the University of Toronto) writes clearly, economically, and at times with passion. If for no other reason, the book is useful as a succinct statement of his particular viewpoint on an issue of great moral significance.

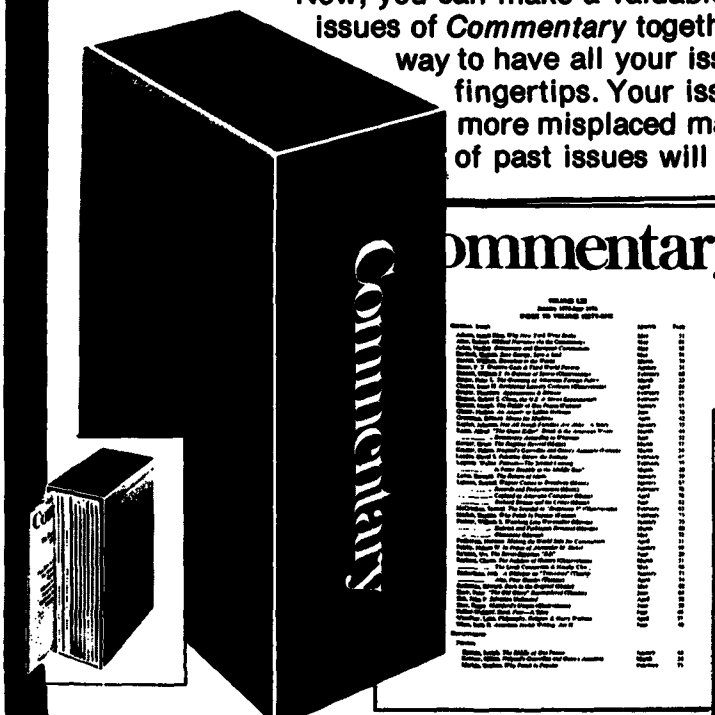
In the introduction, speaking of those who advocate the abolition of the death penalty, Berns states his disagreement with "the misguided, and occasionally even absurd, sentimentality that characterizes their position." Even so, he begins his argument with a generally fair summary of the reasons commonly given for abolition (with one important exception, of which more later): that capital punishment is a violation of biblical morality or natural law; that it violates human dignity; that it fails to deter; that it violates the constitutional proscription of "cruel and unusual punishment."

There follows a historical chapter, tracing the course of the abolitionist position back to the 18th century, when men like Cesare Beccaria and Benjamin Rush urged the end of capital punishment on

PETER L. BERGER *is the author of many books, including* Pyramids of Sacrifice, Facing Up to Modernity, *and, most recently,* The Heretical Imperative *(Doubleday).*

Special offer to readers of Commentary

Now, you can make a valuable addition to your library. Have all your issues of *Commentary* together in a single volume. An elegant practical way to have all your issues always available, together, at your fingertips. Your issues can be arranged in monthly order. No more misplaced magazines. Important articles and features of past issues will be found and referred to in seconds.



Holds 12 issues—Perfect size (9 x 12) for your bookcase. Commentary *stamped in gold leaf on the cover.*

INCLUDED FREE, if you order now, a complete Index to the previous year's *Commentary*. The Index features an orderly listing of every article and every book reviewed over the course of the year. This Index, together with the twelve issues of *Commentary* to which it relates, will truly make your *Commentary* slipcase an all-in-one reference service.

Commentary
165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022

Please send me _____ Commentary Slipcase(s). Price $5.50 each; 2 for $10. My check (or money order) is enclosed. I understand that I will also receive a free Index to the previous year's issues.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Allow four weeks for delivery

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

both philosophical and practical grounds. Berns shows the connection between abolitionism and other reformist causes in the area of criminal law, a connection that has prevailed to the present time. Thus, even today, there continues to be a correlation between the abolitionist position and the view that the purpose of criminal law is rehabilitation rather than punishment.

A separate chapter deals with the question of deterrence. Following the work of Thorsten Sellin, the common view among American criminologists at least since the 1950's has been that the data do not support the notion that capital punishment has a deterrent effect on homicide. This view, of course, has been strongly supportive of the abolitionist cause. Berns criticizes Sellin's conclusions as going beyond the data. More importantly, he claims that newer work points to an opposite conclusion. This, Berns maintains, is particularly so with the work of Isaac Ehrlich, who applied the econometric method of multiple regression analysis to the causes of homicide and concluded (very cautiously) that "one cannot reject the hypothesis that punishment in general, and execution in particular, exert a unique deterrent effect on potential murderers."

But as Berns correctly points out, few of those opposed to capital punishment base their opposition on the technical arguments over deterrence. If the criminologists could prove Sellin right—i.e., show that the death penalty does not deter murderers—this would be a useful debating point, but most abolitionists would probably hold the same position even if Sellin and his followers failed to make their case. The reverse holds for those who favor the death penalty; it also holds for Berns. His final argument is based not on the findings of the criminologists but on the conviction that the death penalty is neither unjust nor inhuman—indeed, that it is necessary if we are to uphold the fear of the law on which civilized society rests. Those who would abolish capital punishment, Berns believes, would really like to abolish *all* punishment. In doing so, they undermine whatever moral foundation society still has. A society that cannot condemn cannot praise, and by this double inability it proclaims that it does not believe its own alleged values. Finally, then, capital punishment is not just morally acceptable; it is, in Berns's words, a "moral necessity."

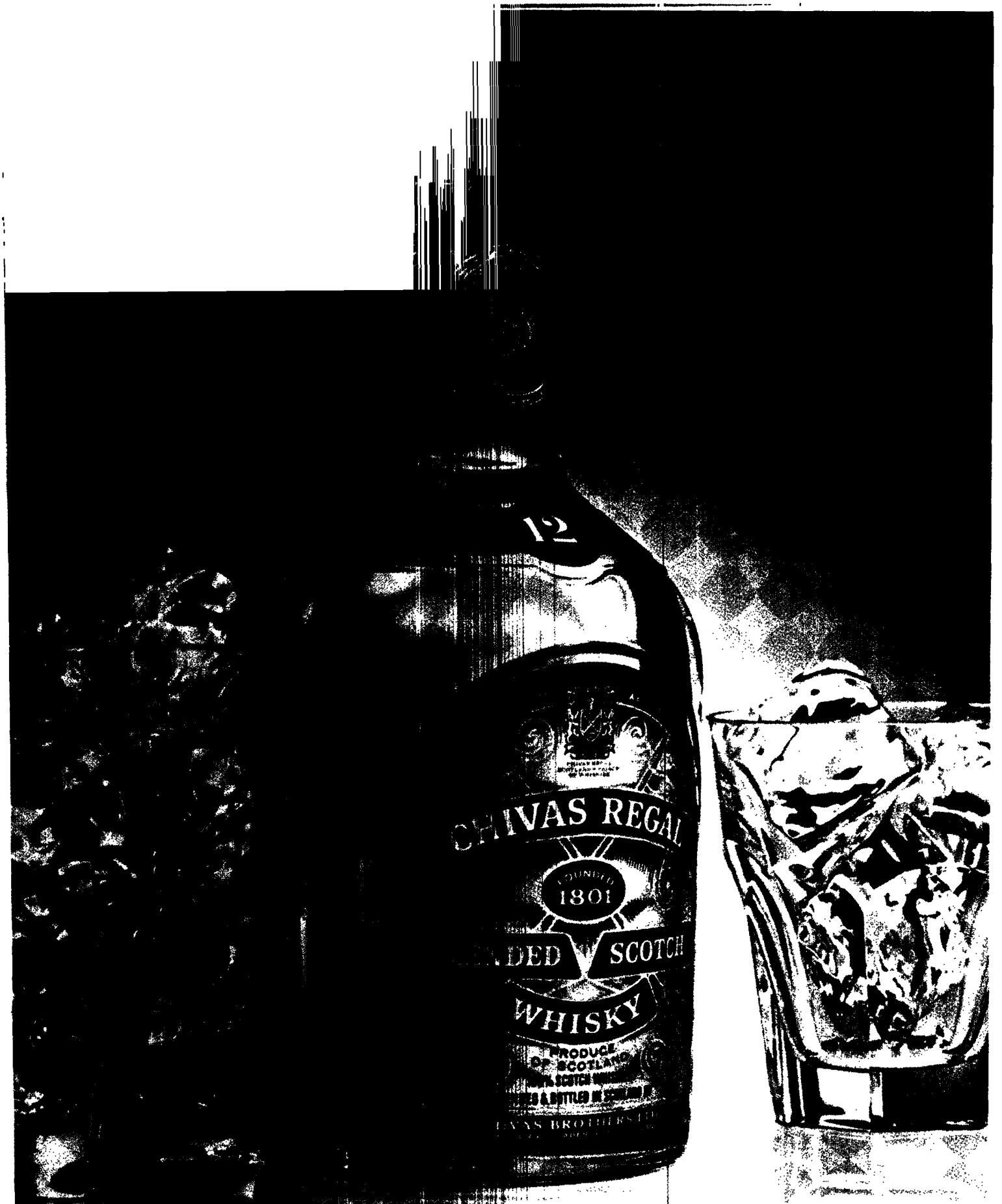
BERNS's argument is unlikely to convince anyone who was not in favor of capital punishment before reading it. What is at issue is not this or that line of reasoning, but a vision of the human condition and of the boundaries of the humanly tolerable. It is noteworthy, however, that Berns appears unable to perceive this point. Missing from his otherwise fair list of the grounds cited in opposition to the death penalty is the one that is probably the most important among abolitionists—that the death penalty is an act of intolerable cruelty, and therefore should not be imposed in a society that deems itself civilized. This, to be sure, is a sentiment. But so is every outrage against acts of cruelty.

In the course of Western history, a number of institutions, previously accepted as being well within the moral limits of civilized society, have come to be looked upon as morally intolerable. Slavery was one such institution, torture another. The opposition to these institutions was also characterized as "misguided," "absurd," and "sentimental." One may assume that Berns would oppose the reintroduction of judicial torture even if some econometrician could show that it would indeed discourage any number of loathsome crimes. This is not "sentimentality." Rather, it is adherence to a perception of what it means to be human. The fact that this perception is historically relative does not invalidate it: men are historical beings, and different moments in history disclose different truths about their condition.

Capital punishment is *sui generis* in its cruelty. It is the impersonal, indeed anonymous, killing of an individual who is totally within the power of the authorities. It is a scheduled killing, for which the victim must wait in one of the most terrible experiences of time possible to a human being. And all of this takes place in the context of ceremony in which one man's dying is part of other men's celebration of morality. This quality of the death penalty makes it very different indeed from any other form of punishment and also from other acts of killing. Berns is probably right in saying that there is a significant overlap between those who oppose capital punishment and those who do not like the law to punish at all. There is probably also an overlap between the former group and those who favor a number of other humanizing policies with which Berns agrees. The morally crucial point is that one can be passionately opposed to the death penalty and, at the same time, affirm the right of the law to punish and the right of society to defend itself, if necessary by force of arms. To be opposed to capital punishment need not be the same as holding a "soft" position on other issues of the law or being some sort of pacifist.

PUBLIC-OPINION polls indicate that the abolitionist cause is losing ground. It is plausible to think that the rising sentiment in favor of capital punishment is linked to a general shift toward greater conservatism in society. It is all the more important, then, to insist that one may deplore the first even if one welcomes the second. The Right, in America as elsewhere, has often been given to a nostalgic yearning for the gallows. This tendency is the moral equivalent of the Left's recurring sympathy for revolutionary terrorism. If it is possible to be on the Left without embracing the terrorist, it is possible to be on the Right and to reject the hangman. More than that, it is precisely when individuals with different ideological positions recognize that certain acts of cruelty are beyond the limits of what is humanly tolerable that some hope is held out for a common framework of moral judgments. Opposition to capital punishment is a strategic issue in such a moral quest.

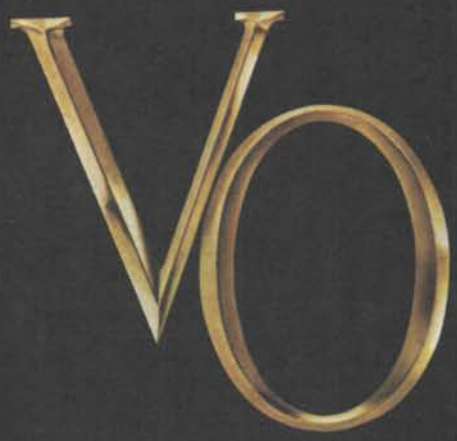
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



it. Think of all the
king ordinary Scotch.

ENDED SCOTCH WHISKY • 86 PROOF • GENERAL WINE & SPIRITS CO., NEW YORK, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Some people set their sights higher than others.

Seagram's V.O.

The symbol of imported luxury. Bottled in Canada.

Enjoy our quality in moderation.

Canadian whisky. A blend of Canada's finest whiskies. 6 years old. 86.8 Proof. Seagram Distillers Co., N.Y.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED